

# Mark 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

## Analysis

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Mark describes the baptismal theophany: 'straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him' (εὐθὺς ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος εἶδεν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν). The verb 'opened' (schizomenous, σχιζομένους) means 'torn apart' or 'ripped open'—violent imagery recalling Isaiah 64:1 where the prophet pleads for God to rend the heavens and come down. Jesus' baptism answers that prayer—God tears open heaven to enter human history. The Spirit 'like a dove' (hōs peristeran) descending signifies the Spirit's anointing of Jesus for messianic ministry. The dove may recall Genesis 1:2 (Spirit hovering over creation waters) and Genesis 8:8-12 (Noah's dove signaling new creation after judgment). This scene reveals the Trinity: Father speaks, Son is baptized, Spirit descends.

## Historical Context

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First-century Jewish expectation held that the heavens were 'closed'—God seemed distant, prophecy had ceased, and the Spirit was largely absent. The intertestamental period (400 years between Malachi and John) was marked by apparent divine silence. Jesus' baptism shatters this—heaven opens, the Spirit descends visibly, and the Father speaks. The dove imagery was familiar in Judaism as symbol of peace, purity, and God's presence (the Spirit 'hovering' over creation in Genesis 1:2 uses similar language). Luke's Gospel specifies the Spirit descended

'in bodily form like a dove' (Luke 3:22), emphasizing the visible, objective nature of this event, not merely subjective vision.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the 'tearing open' of heaven at Jesus' baptism demonstrate God's decisive intervention to bridge the gap between divine and human realms?
2. What does the visible descent of the Spirit upon Jesus teach about the necessity of Spirit-anointing for ministry and the Trinitarian nature of redemption?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	εὐθέως	ἀναβαίνων	ἀπὸ	τοῦ	ὑδατος	εἶδεν
And	straightway	coming up	out of	G3588	the water	he saw
G2532	G2112	G305	G575		G5204	G1492
σχιζομένους	τοὺς	οὐρανοὺς	καὶ	τὸ	πνεῦμα	ὥσεὶ
opened	G3588	the heavens	And	G3588	the Spirit	like
G4977		G3772	G2532		G4151	G5616
περιστερὰν	καταβαῖνον	ἐπ'	αὐτόν·			
a dove	descending	upon	him			
G4058	G2597	G1909	G846			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 3:22** (Spirit): And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

**Isaiah 64:1** (Parallel theme): Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

**Matthew 3:16** (Spirit): And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

**Isaiah 42:1** (Spirit): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

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