

Form: Chorale - Recit (A) - Recit (B) - Chorale - Aria (T) - Recit (B) - Aria (A) - Chorale.
 The cantata is in chiasmic form. Bach often used chiasmic (x-shaped/symmetrical) forms, in which center movements (where the mirror image begins) provide the crux of the matter. There antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text).

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NBA I/4; BC A25

1. S. after New Year (BWV 153, 58, 248-V)

*1 Peter 4:12-19 (Sharing the sufferings of Christ)

*Matthew 2:13-23 (Mary & Joseph's flight to Egypt)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 2 January 1724 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas)

This cantata belongs to Bach's first cantata cycle in Leipzig (see note).

The Gospel's account of Mary and Joseph's flight into Egypt becomes the point of departure for a cantata about the enemies of a Christian.

Martin Petzoldt outlines the symmetrical structure (Bach-Kommentar 2:338)

5. Chorale. God will not go back
6. T arioso. God comforts me: storms may rage...
4. T recit. God comforts me: but...
7. B recit. Take comfort in Jesus
3. B arioso. Fear not, I am with you
8. A aria. With tribulation into the kingdom of God
2. A recit. With fear in life here
9. Chorale. My God prepares me.
1. Chorale. My enemies are mighty.

Cantata No. 153

Schau, lieber Gott, wie meine Feind

153/1. ●Prayer: Behold my foes; without thy help I am ruined! (153/1).

1. Choral (Mel. „Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein“)

Soprano +Vln I
 +Vln II

Alto +Vln II
 +Vla

Tenore +Vla

Basso

Instrumentation:
 Vln I, II
 Vla
 SATB
 Continuo, Organo

Schau, lieber Gott, wie mei-ne, Feind, da-mit ich stets muß käm - pfen, } Herr,
 so listig und so mächtig sind, daß sie mich leicht-lich däm - pfen! }

Schau, lieber Gott, wie — mein Feind, da-mit ich stets muß käm - pfen, } Herr,
 so listig und so mächtig sind, daß sie mich leichtlich däm - pfen! }

Schau, lieber Gott, wie — mein Feind, da-mit ich stets muß käm - pfen, } Herr,
 so listig und so mächtig sind, daß sie mich leichtlich däm - pfen! }

Schau, lieber Gott, wie — mein Feind, da-mit ich stets muß käm - pfen, } Herr,
 so listig und so mächtig sind, daß sie mich leichtlich däm - pfen! }

A minor E major G7 A minor A minor D major

The incorporation of 3 chorales in the cantata may have been intended to reduce the demands on the choir boys during a very busy performance season (see note). Martin Petzoldt notes that hymnbooks in Saxony (therefore in Leipzig) did not include "Schau lieber Gott" but the chorale was sung by the Lutheran church in Cöthen. See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:339. (Note: In Cöthen, Bach worked at a Calvinist court). However, Eric Chafe sees the chorales as significant components in a 3-part architecture, in which modal, minor, and major harmonic progressions have allegorical meaning. See *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 111-126. See note for more.

Five traditionally identified enemies of Christ: World, Devil, Death, Hell, and Sin.

5

wo mich deine Gnad nicht hält, so kannder Teufel, Fleisch und Welt mich leicht in Unglück stür - zen.

wo mich deine Gnad nicht hält, so kann der Teufel, Fleisch und Welt mich leicht in Unglück stür - zen.

wo mich deine Gnad nicht hält, so kannder Teufel, Fleisch und Welt mich leicht in Unglück stür - zen.

wo mich deine Gnad nicht hält, so kann der Teufel, Fleisch und Welt mich leicht in Unglück stür - zen.

G major E minor B major A minor D major C# dim.7 D# dim.7 E major

Chromatic descent for "plunge into disaster."

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 153

Eric Chafe suggests that cadences to the apparent dominant can raise questions of meaning. See, for example, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. xii-xiii, 188-189, 221.

153/2. 2. Recitativo • Prayer for help in face of lions & dragons (153/2).

Secco

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 6 mm.

Alto is often the voice of intimate faith.

1. Alto E D B C F A D# C#

Mein liebster Gott, ach laß dich's doch er-barmen, ach hilf doch. hilf mir
 My dearest God, ah, let thyself (please) show-mercy, ah, do-help, help (this)

E7 A minor F major B7 E minor

3^{II} A# F# G

Armen! Ich woh-ne hier bei lauter Löwen und bei Drachen, und die-se wollen mir durch
 poor-wretch! I dwell here amidst (many) lions and amidst dragons, and these seek - by

F#7 A# dim.7

The text is reminiscent of biblical passages such as Psalm 57:4: "I lie in the midst of lions that greedily devour the sons of men; their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongues sharp swords" and Psalm 7:2: "Like a lion they rend me, dragging me away, with none to rescue."

6 G#

Wut und Grimmigkeit in kurzer Zeit den Garaus völlig machen.
 (their) rage and ferocity in short (order) (my) final-ruin fully to-complete.

E# dim.7 C#7 F# minor B7 E minor B minor F# major

153/3. 3. Aria • Vox Dei: Fear not, I am with thee: Isaiah 41:10 (153/3).

Some manuscripts have "Arioso."

The ritornello is repeated 6 times as a quasi-ostinato, cadencing in in Em (8), Em (24), Bm (35), DM (43), Em (51), and Em (58). The vocal part is embedded in this ritornello (Vokaleinbau). Without any interludes, the movement is like an arioso.

1. Ritornello based on vocal line. Continuo alone.

B7 E minor E minor

Line 1 (4x with internal repetitions. Leaps to high notes and syncopations emphasize particular words.)

7 **Basso**

Here the bass is the vox Dei. Fürch-te dich nicht, ich, ich bin mit dir, fürch -

E minor E minor

The dance-like rhythm suggests carefree assurance. The ostinato bass is sometimes veiled, perhaps suggesting God's hidden hand.

"Shivering" anacrusis for "fürchte" ("to fear").

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 153

13

te dich nicht, fürchte dich nicht, fürchte dich nicht, ich,

D7 G major E7

19

ich bin mit dir, ich bin mit dir, fürchte dich nicht, ich bin mit dir, fürchte dich

Parallel octaves

A minor B7 E minor

24

nicht, ich bin mit dir. Wei - che nicht, wei - che nicht, ich bin -

Line 2 (2x). hemiola

E minor E minor A7 D major

30

dein Gott, wei - che nicht, weiche nicht, ich bin dein Gott;

The text is repeated in a higher register.

F#7 B minor B minor

36

ich stärke dich, ich helfe dir auch durch die rechte Hand meiner

Line 3 (2x).

B minor A(7) D major D major

42

— Gerech-tig-keit, ich stär-ke dich, ich hel-fe-dir auch durch die

D major D major B(7) E minor

48

rech-te Hand mei-ner Gerech-tig-keit.

hemiola mf

E minor E minor

53

Secco

E minor E minor

4. Recitativo •Prayer for help in face of growing threat from foes (153/4).

153/4.

1. Tenore

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 6 mm. The cry for help is clothed in tortured harmony, including many diminished 7th chords.

A C E D F# B C#

Du sprichst zwar, lie-ber Gott, zu mei-ner See-len Ruh mir ei-nen

Thou dost-speak indeed, dear God, unto my soul's rest, to-me a

D minor G major



D minor (For significance, see note.)

A# NBA: meinen

3

Trost in meinem Leiden zu. Ach, a-ber mei-ne Pla-ge ver-

(word of) comfort in my suffering -- Ah, but my trouble

A# dim.7 E# dim.7 F# major B minor G# dim.7 Highly chromatic. E7

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6 D# G

größert sich von Tag zu Ta.ge, denn meiner Feinde sind so viel, mein Leben ist ihr
increases - from day to day, for my foes are so many, my life is their

D# dim.7 A# dim.7 E minor E minor G minor A7

9 Circular melisma for "Bogen" ("bows"), then fast upward scales in pattering for the drawing of the bow and shooting of arrows.

Ziel. ihr Bo - gen wird auf mich gespannt, sie richten ih-re Pfeile zum Ver-
aim, their bows - are against me drawn, they prepare their arrows for

D minor G7

11^{II} (Andante) Chromatic, step-wise descent in continuo and singer's lines for "sterben" ("die").

derben. ich soll von ih-ren Händen ster-
destruction, I am by their hands to-die;

F# dim.7 D7 G minor E# dim.7 F minor C minor N6 F# dim.7

14 **Recit.**

- ben; Gott! meine Not ist dir bekannt, die ganze Welt wird mir zur Marter-
God! My distress is to-thee known. The whole world becomes for-me a den-of-torture;

C minor G7 C major C# dim.7 D minor F# dim.7

16^{II} Chromatic pitch saturation. E-flat A F# D G E C# B F

Andante

höhle; hilf. Helfer. hilf! erret.te mei-ne See - le!
Help, Helper, help! Deliver my soul!

D7 G minor C# dim.7 A major D minor G# D minor D minor

Torturous chromatic voice leading in voice and bass (ever higher in the voice) creates tension.

153/5. **5. Choral** (Mel. „Befiel du deine Wege“) • God's purposes prevail despite opposition of devils (153/5).
 Soprano 1. "hier" in contemporary hymnals.

The text is reminiscent of a variety of biblical passages that affirm God's victory over the devil (see note).

The change in wording from "hier" ("here") to "dir" ("you") makes the statement forcefully personal.

Und ob gleich al - le Teu - fel dir woll - ten wi - der - stehn,
 so wird doch oh - ne Zwei - fel Gott nicht zu - rük - ke gehn;

Bach clothes the familiar tune in chromatic harmonies to reflect the concerns expressed in the text.



was er (sich vor-) ihm für - ge - nom - men und was er ha - ben will, das

muß doch end - lich kom - men zu sei - nem Zweck und Ziel.

Eric Chafe suggests that cadences to the apparent dominant can raise questions of meaning. See *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. xii–xiii, 188–189, 121, 221, etc.

6. Aria • Storms defied; God has promised to be with me (153/6).
153/6. 1. Viol. I

Operatic rage aria for tenor.

Viol. II Va. Ritornello

Tritone "Diabolus in musica" (see note)

A minor B7 E minor

2

A7 D minor G7 E minor C major

3π

E7

A minor Unison strings.

5 Tenore

Stürmt nur, stürmt, ihr Trüb - - sals - wet - ter, - - stürmt nur,

Bc. p

Viol. I

Viol. II Va.

A minor D# dim.7 B7 E major

6π

stürmt, ihr Trüb - - sals - wet - ter, - - stürmt nur, stürmt nur, ihr Trüb - sals -

B7 E minor A7 D minor G7 E minor C major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 153

8

32nd notes depict the "seething torrents."

8
wet-ter,wallt,ihrFlu - ten,auf mich los. wallt, _____
Unison in all 5 parts.
E7
A minor

9th

9th
_____ ihr Flu - ten, auf _____ mich los,stürmt nur,stürmt,ihr Trübsals-wet - ter,
A minor D major

11

11
wallt,ihr Flu - ten,auf mich los, stürmt nur,stürmt,ihr Trübsals.
G major E7 A minor

12th

12th
wet-ter, wallt, _____ ihrFlu - ten,auf mich
Unison in all 5 parts.
B7 E minor E minor E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 153

14

los!

Ritornello

E minor F#7 B minor E7 A minor

Detailed description: This system shows measures 14 and 15. Measure 14 features a vocal line with the word "los!" and a piano accompaniment. A red box highlights the beginning of the piano part. The word "Ritornello" is written in red above the piano part. Chord labels E minor, F#7, B minor, E7, and A minor are placed below the piano part. Measure 15 continues the piano accompaniment with chord labels D7, B minor, G major, and B7.

15

D7 B minor G major B7

Detailed description: This system shows measures 15 and 16. Measure 15 continues the piano accompaniment with chord labels D7, B minor, G major, and B7. Measure 16 continues the piano accompaniment.

17

Unison strings

Schlagt, ihr Un-glücks -

E minor (C# dim.7)

E minor

Detailed description: This system shows measures 17 and 18. Measure 17 features a vocal line with the word "Schlagt, ihr Un-glücks -" and a piano accompaniment. A red box highlights the beginning of the piano part. The word "Unison strings" is written in red above the piano part. Measure 18 continues the piano accompaniment with chord labels E minor and (C# dim.7). The word "E minor" is written in red below the piano part.

18

flam - men, ü - ber mich zu

32nd notes depict the "flames of misfortune."

Viol. I

C# dim.7 A7 D minor G minor

Detailed description: This system shows measures 18 and 19. Measure 18 features a vocal line with the words "flam - men, ü - ber mich zu" and a piano accompaniment. A red box highlights the beginning of the piano part. The text "32nd notes depict the 'flames of misfortune.'" is written in red above the piano part. Measure 19 continues the piano accompaniment with chord labels C# dim.7, A7, D minor, and G minor. The word "Viol. I" is written in red above the piano part.

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20

8 sam - men, schlagt, ihr Un - glücks - flam -

Viol., Va. Bc. Viol., Va.

A7 D minor D minor

21^{II}

8 men, ü - bermich zu - sam - men, stört, ihr Fein - de, mei - ne

Bc. Viol., Va. Bc.

C7 F7 D7

23

Word painting: Extended note ending in a fermata for "Ruh" ("rest").

8 Ruh. Calmness in the face of the onslaught. spricht mir doch Gott tröstlich

Viol. I Viol. II Va. Continuo alone for reference to God speaking a comforting word.

G minor A7 D minor C# dim.7 D minor

25

8 zu: ich bin dein Hort und Er - ret - ter, — ich bin

Viol. I Trio texture.

D minor C# dim.7 A major D minor

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26^{II}

dein Hort und Er-ret-ter, — ich bin dein Hort, dein Hort und Er-

E7 A minor A minor B7 E minor

Word painting: The most frenetic melisma is reserved for the Savior (the divine counterpart to the devilish storms).

28

ret-ter, ich bin dein Hort und Er-ret

A7 D minor G7 E minor C major

29^{II}

ter, und Erret

Cadenza-like.

E7 A minor

The tenor in his melisma is joined by the strings.

31

ter. Ritornello

A minor B7 E minor Dal Segno

Secco
7. Recitativo • Sufferings of Christchild gives us courage (153/7).

153/7.

1. Basso

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 10 mm.

Getrost, mein Herz, er - dul - de dei - nen Schmerz, laß dich dein
 Courage! My heart, endure thy pain, Let thee thy

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 10 mm.

Continuo bass up 8va (see full score).

C major (for significance, see note).

C7 F7

3 Kreuz nicht un - terdrücken! Gott wird dich schon zu rechter Zeit er - quicken; muß
 cross not crush! God will thee indeed at-the proper time refresh; must

G# dim.7 A minor D7 G major G major

6 doch sein lie - ber Sohn, dein Je - sus, in noch zar - ten Jah - ren viel
 indeed his dear Son, thy Jesus, in yet tender years, much

E major E7 A7

The reference here is to the day's Gospel: the account of Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt (see note).

8 größ - re Not er - fah - ren, da ihm der Wü - te - rich He - ro - des die
 greater affliction experience, when him the tyrant Herod the

A# dim.7 F#7 A# dim.7 C aug6

10 äü - Ber - ste Ge - fahr des To - des mit mör - de - ri - schen Fäu - sten droht! Kaum
 gravest peril of death with murderous fists threatens! Scarce

F major B7 E major F# minor

The reference to "murderous fists" is reminiscent of the Passion account and also a statement by the Apostle Paul (see note).

12

kömmt er auf die Er-den, so muß er schon ein Flücht-ling wer-den!
comes he to earth, then must he already a fugitive become!

D# dim.7 E minor

14

Wohl-an, mit Je-su trü-ste dich und glau-be fe-stig-lich: den-
Come-then, with Jesus comfort thyself and believe steadfastly: to-those

E minor C(7) F major G7

"Andante" is Bach's marking. The arioso relates to the Epistle reading of the day (see note).



16

dante

je-nigen, die hier mit Chri-sto lei-sen, will er das Him-mel-
who here with Christ suffer, would he the kingdom-of-heaven

C major B-flat major F major G7 A minor

Arioso duet between singer and continuo.

Imitation between singer and continuo reflects the "Imitatio Christi" referenced in the text.

8va up in original.

18ⁿ

reich be-schei-den.
apportion.

G7 C major C major



8. Aria 153/8. •Suffering ends in heaven where it changes to rapture (153/8).

Form (Rhyme: ABABCC)
 Repeated Antecedent Binary Form
 Ritornello A (Antecedent: mm.1-12) GM
 Lines 1-3/Rit A (13-24) GM-DM
 Rit B (Consequent: 25-48) DM-GM
 Lines 1-3/Rit B' (49-60) DM-Am
 Line 4/Rit B" (2x: 61-70) Am-DM
 Lines 5-6/Imitative accomp. (71-89) GM
 Rit B (89-106) GM

1. Viol. I Ritornello A (Antecedent).

Viol. II
Va.

Ritornello derived from vocal theme.

G major A7 D major D major E7 A minor A minor

Minuet (perhaps from a pre-existing instrumental work or a parody of a movement from a secular work).

7

hemiola

A minor D7 G major B minor A7 D major D major D7

Alfred Dürr writes, "It is in binary dance form: each section is first stated by the instruments alone, after which the voice part is incorporated in its slightly expanded reprise. Only towards the end of the second reprise ... [m. 71] does a new 'allegro' theme enter, forming a spirited conclusion to the vocal part of the aria. Thereafter, the instruments take up the interrupted reprise once more, bringing it to an end in the form of a postlude." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, p. 166.

Lines 1-3/Ritornello A (Antecedent).

13 **Alto**

Soll ich — mei-nen Le - bens - lauf un - ter Kreuz und

Arch-shaped melody depicts "mein Lebenslauf" ("course of my life").

G major A7 D major D major E7 A minor E7 A minor G# dim.7

19

Trüb - sal füh - ren, hört — es doch im Him - mel — auf.

hemiola

E major A minor D7 G major B minor A7 D major D major

Ritornello B (Consequent).

25

D major D7 G major B(7) D# dim.7 E minor

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31

E minor E minor E minor G major E7 A minor

37

D7 G major G major A7 D major D pedal... G major D7 G major

43

hemiola

48

Lines 1-3/Ritornello B'

Soll_ich mei - nen Le - bens - lauf

G major D major D7 G major B(7)

53

un - ter Kreuz und Trüb - sal - füh - ren, hört es -

E minor D# dim.7 E minor E minor E7 A minor

58

Line 4/Ritornello B" imitative.

doch im Him - mel auf Da ist lauter Ju - bi -

A minor D7 G major

64

lie - ren, da ist lau - ter Ju - bi - lie - ren,

G7 C major C major A minor A minor D7

69

The voice stops again.

Allegro

Lines 5-6/Imitative accompaniment on new theme.

Word painting: At the reference to sorrow transforming into (exchanged for) joy, the poetic meter changes from trochaic to amphibrachic. The tempo changes to allegro, a new musical theme is introduced, and a "reversing" motive is used for "verwechselt" ("exchanges/transforms").

The instruments stop again.

da - selbst ver - wechselt mein Je - sus das Lei - den mit

G major D major G major G major F#(7)

75

Long melisma with "contemplative" pauses for "ewigen Freude" ("eternal joy").

se - li - ger Won - ne, mit e - wi - gen Freu -

B minor E7 A minor D7 G major

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80

Musical score for measures 80-84. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations in red are: A7, D major, D7, G major.

85

Musical score for measures 85-89. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations in red are: G major, G major. Performance markings include "hemiola" and "den." (denegation). A red box highlights the beginning of the "Ritornello B." section.

90

Parallel 3rds suggest sweetness.

Musical score for measures 90-95. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations in red are: G major, G7, C major, E7, A minor, D7, G major. A red box highlights the beginning of the section.

96

Musical score for measures 96-100. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations in red are: G major, A7, D major, G major, D7, G major.

101

Musical score for measures 101-105. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations in red are: A7, D7, G major, G major. A red box highlights the beginning of the section. A "hemiola" marking is present.

These are the last 3 stanzas of 18 in the 1587 chorale "Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid" (1587) by Martin Moller (1547-1606) in its eighteenth-verse version, which was written to the Latin hymn "Jesus dulcis memoria." Including 3 stanzas of chorale makes the movement unique among Bach's cantatas.

153/9. **9. Choral** (Mel. „Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid“)
 •Prayer: Help me to live faithfully until I reach heaven (153/9).

Bach sets the chorale in triple meter, continuing the joyful mood of the previous minuet (by contrast, compare BWV 58/5 and BWV 3/1&6).

1. Soprano
 +Vln I 1. Drum will ich, weil ich le - be noch, das Kreuz dir fröh-lich tragen nach;

Alto
 +Vln II 2. Hilf mir mein Sach recht grei - fen an, daß ich mein' Lauf voll - en - den - kann,

Tenore
 +Vla 3. Er - halt mein Herz im Glau - ben rein, so leb und sterb ich dir al - lein;

Basso
 1. Drum will ich, weil ich le - be noch, das Kreuz dir fröh-lich tragen nach;

C major D(7) G major D major G major G major

The chorale is replete with allusions to various biblical passages and themes (see note).

9
 mein Gott, mach mich dar - zu - be - reit, es dient zum Be - sten al - le - zeit!
 hilf mir auch zwin - gen Fleisch und Blut, für Sünd und Schanden mich be - hüt!
 Je - su, mein Trost, hör mein - Be - gier, o mein Hei - land, wär ich bei dir!
 mein Gott, mach mich dar - zu - be - reit, es dient zum Be - sten al - le - zeit!

E major A minor A7 D minor C major G major C major D7 G major C major