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St. John Passion (BWV 245)

Bach's Passions mark the culmination of a centuries-long history of Passion music. As early as the medieval period, the Passion story was read (chanted) in a semi-dramatic fashion, using three different ranges of the voice for the roles of the story: the part of Jesus was sung in low range, that of the narrator (Evangelist) in mid-range, and that of the crowd (*turba*) in high range. By the mid-1200s the roles of the Passion were distributed among several individuals for more realistic effect. Still later, composers began incorporating polyphony in their compositions—usually for the words of the crowd but occasionally also for the utterances of other characters. Such settings were intended to help re-create for the listener a first-hand experience of the story.

In the early sixteenth century (after the Reformation of 1517) Passions in Protestant Germany were sometimes monophonic (i.e., they consisted of unaccompanied, single strands of melody), sometimes polyphonic (multiple simultaneous melodic lines), or, at times, a mixture of the two (the narrative parts sung as monophony, individual character parts as polyphony). Passions could also be in either Latin or German.

After 1650 the trend toward ever more emotive texts led to the appearance of the oratorio Passion in northern Germany. This type retained the biblical text for the main characters (Evangelist, Jesus, Pilate, crowd, etc.), and expanded it with poetic texts of a reflective nature, sinfonias, other biblical texts, newly created poetry, and chorales (hymns). As to their form, oratorio Passions more or less resembled operas—that is, the soloists presented recitatives (narratives sung in a manner that approximates speech) and arias (song-like movements in which melodic considerations are primary, the action stops, and the character reflects on what has transpired). Unlike operas, however, oratorio Passions were not

staged. The earliest oratorio Passions appeared in Hamburg, which was an important operatic center in Germany.

By the 1700s there were four basic types of sung Passions: the simple old type (no instruments, some embellishment of the story with hymns), the oratorio Passion (biblical text with insertions as described above), the Passion oratorio (completely original text; i.e., no Bible text), and the lyrical Passion meditation (no direct dialogue).¹

Bach's obituary reported that he had written five Passions. In fact, there were probably only four since the *St. Luke Passion* is not authentic. Of the remaining ones, unfortunately only the *St. John* and the *St. Matthew* survive intact. The *St. Mark* was destroyed in World War II (although the text survives). A fourth one was perhaps a *St. Matthew Passion* from the end of Bach's stay in Weimar, written for a 1717 performance in Gotha. Recent research suggests that some of the music in the *St. John* and *St. Matthew* were taken from this work.

Both of Bach's extant Passions are oratorio Passions. This type was important to orthodox Lutherans because its libretto adhered closely to a single Gospel text. However, when Bach came to Leipzig the oratorio Passion was a relatively new phenomenon. Leipzig was a conservative city and resisted overly theatrical music in church. In fact, when Bach's *St. John Passion* was premiered in 1724, oratorio Passions had been heard in Leipzig's principal churches in only three previous years. Martin Geck writes:

Leipzig audiences had little experience of large-scale oratorio Passions scored for elaborate forces. In 1717 one of Telemann's Passions had been performed in the *Neukirche* (something of a sideshow on the city's musical scene), and in 1721 and 1722 Bach's predecessor, Johann Kuhnau, had made a modest and somewhat halfhearted attempt to perform a concert Passion. In this respect, there was no comparison with Hamburg, where the Passion oratorio had become something of an institution in the city's musical life—not, of course, as part of the divine service but within the framework of concert performances. As early as 1705 Hamburg's concert-goers had been able to hear a setting of Christian Friedrich Hunold's oratorio *Der blutige und sterbende Jesus* by the director of the Hamburg opera, Reinhard Keiser, in a performance for which admission was charged and which took the form of a theatrical production "on a stage specially prepared for the occasion" at the city's almshouse. . . . In Leipzig the influence of traditional theology and religion was far greater, with the result that the sort of conditions that obtained in Hamburg were altogether unthinkable: it is no accident that, on taking up his appointment, Bach had to agree not to write in an excessively operatic vein. . . . Not that the new Thomaskantor harbored any such thoughts. Far from it. Even at this early stage . . . the great universalist was already striving to merge the old with the new, the

sacred with the secular, the functional with the autonomous, general sublimity with individual beauty. His music can be read as a perfect reflection of an age that knows a yesterday, a today and a tomorrow.²

Bach's *St. John Passion* was first performed at the afternoon Vespers Service on Good Friday, April 7, 1724, the composer's first Easter in that city. It is possible that he had written the work in the months preceding the move, in anticipation of his new position. On the other hand, if he wrote it after assuming the position with its associated hectic schedule, he probably did so during Lent when cantatas were generally not required (an exception was the Feast of the Annunciation—March 25).

There is little question that Bach intended the *St. John Passion* to have great dramatic force. The narrative is taut: the action is fast-paced, and dramatic contrasts are starkly drawn (e.g., the depiction of a divine, serene Jesus over against a bloodthirsty, howling mob). Bach clearly expected the biblical narration itself to provide much of the work's emotional impact, for he gave to the Evangelist a particularly demanding and often highly expressive part (cf. the passage depicting Peter's tearful remorse).

Polyphonic music was forbidden in Leipzig during the final weeks of Advent and during Lent, although the first Sunday of Advent and the Feast of the Annunciation were exceptions to this rule. Imagine what it must have been like to hear a work such as the *St. John Passion* after a "tempus clausum" with nothing but simple hymns and chants!

Passions were traditionally performed on Good Friday in the afternoon (Vespers) service. The liturgy for that day was essentially a simplified version of Sunday Vespers. The first part of the Passion came before the sermon (replacing the cantata of a normal Sunday); the second part followed the sermon (replacing the usual *Magnificat*). The order of service was:³

Hymn ("Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund")

Passion, Part I

Sermon

Passion, Part II

Motet: "Ecce quomodo moritur" by Jacob Handl (1550–91)

Collect

Benediction

Hymn: "Nun danket alle Gott"

Since only two of Bach's Passions survive, it is illuminating to compare them. In general the *St. John* is more realistic, faster paced, and more anguished than the reflective and resigned *St. Matthew*. It is shorter and less episodic, with fewer reflective interpolations. It also has simpler

orchestration than the *St. Matthew*, which calls for double choir and orchestra.

While Bach rendered St. Matthew's Gospel on a grand scale . . . his treatment of St. John's narrative, with its focus on the lengthy argument between Pilate and the [religious leaders] over Jesus' fate, is more intensely dramatic. At the same time, its simplicity and smaller scale make it a very intimate, personal work.⁴

In the monumental and expansive *St. Matthew*, a series of short scenes are interrupted by frequent lyrical meditations provided by soloists or vocal ensemble, giving the entire work a contemplative tone. The *St. John* keeps its focus on the story itself—the rapidly unfolding events of a great travesty of justice, which must nevertheless be understood as the predestined plan of a sovereign God. That the overall shape and tone of the *St. John* were determined in part by the nature of the Johannine account itself has been noted by Andreas Glöckner, who writes:

Bach's decision to set to music the unabridged Passion story according to St. John had serious consequences for the conception of the work as a whole, since in only a few places . . . did it allow the insertion of reflective arias and ariosos, and even after revising the work several times Bach arrived at no completely satisfactory solution to the problem of just where to position these sections of contemplative commentary. . . . Two musically especially rewarding sections, where Peter weeps and where the veil of the temple is torn apart, are borrowed from the St. Matthew Gospel. . . . Bach lends them weight by means of motivic development in metrically anchored recitative, and inserts lengthy contemplative sections into them.⁵

It has been said that the *St. John Passion* lacks textual unity. The reason for this is that “the text is something of a mongrel.”⁶ It may well have been compiled by the composer himself, “choosing texts from existing Passion poems and altering them, if necessary, to fit his concept.”⁷ While most of the biblical text is from the Gospel of John, there are also some passages from the Gospel of Matthew: Peter's remorse and the earthquake scene. The nonbiblical material comes from several sources: mostly from a famous devotional Passion poem by B. H. Brockes, *Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus* (1712) (which had been set by other composers, including Handel and Telemann) and the *St. John Passion* libretto by C. H. Postel (c. 1700).

Bach revised the work several times. Unlike the *St. Matthew*, the *St. John Passion* existed in several versions—at least four. In version II (1725—the year Bach composed many chorale cantatas) he replaced or

augmented several movements. The opening chorus, “Herr, unser Herrscher,” was displaced by a chorale fantasia, “O Mensch beweine deine Sünde groß,” and the closing chorale, “Ach Herr, laß deine liebe Engeln,” by a lengthy chorale setting of “Christe, du Lamm Gottes” from Cantata 23. In Version III (c. 1732), he removed the substitute numbers (for example, now that “O Mensch beweine deine Sünde groß” had been incorporated in the *St. Matthew*, he removed it from the *St. John* and replaced it with the original opening movement, “Herr, unser Herrscher”), removed the interpolations from the Gospel of Matthew, and made some other changes. In the fourth and final version (1749) Bach restored the deleted movements, largely reestablishing the original sequence (which now again included the interpolations from the Gospel of Matthew), and enriched the orchestration.⁸

The final result is a work of great dramatic force. Much of this is due to the intensity of the Evangelist’s part, which is extremely demanding. While the *St. Matthew Passion* presents Christ as the divine sufferer (thus, for example, Bach always accompanies the sung words of Jesus with strings, a kind of “halo” effect), the *St. John* presents Christ’s suffering in all its human agony. This may have been the reason for Bach’s decision *not* to orchestrate the words of Jesus, even in the later versions, despite his familiarity with this practice (earlier in his career he had arranged Reinhard Keiser’s Passion, which accompanies Jesus’ words with strings) and his later adoption of the practice in the *St. Matthew Passion*. In one sense this emphasis on Jesus’ humanity is surprising, for the Gospel of John stresses Christ’s divinity more emphatically than the other three Gospels. Nevertheless, because John’s Gospel also provides more detail concerning the trial before Pilate, the story becomes more gripping in human terms. Thus Bach’s *St. John Passion* became more impassioned than the later *St. Matthew*.

A special feature of Bach’s two Passions is the frequent appearance of chorales. Both Passions incorporate more chorales than was usual at the time: thirteen in the *St. Matthew*, eleven in the *St. John*. Although these hymns were probably sung without congregational participation they nevertheless represent the corporate response of the faithful, and their frequency suggests a desire on Bach’s part to elicit a response from his listeners throughout the unfolding of the story.

In the *St. John Passion* the chorales sometimes incorporate dramatic action. Thus, for example, in the chorale “Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück” (No. 14 [20]) the choir comments on Peter’s denial of Christ. While these hymn tunes would have been familiar to Bach’s audience, his harmonizations were new and often exceptionally rich, highlighting the significance of particular words or phrases. Marion Metcalf writes:

Because the words and tunes were familiar to seventeenth-century Lutherans (many had been used since Luther's time), the chorales provided the work's most direct linkage between the story and the religious responses of the devout listener. Bach's settings of the chorales masterfully reinforce their meaning.⁹

Sometimes Bach uses a chorale as the basis for an elaborate musical setting. Part I of the *St. John Passion*, for example, opens and closes with chorale-based movements. In such movements the hymn provides an additional layer of musical and textual meaning.

A significant formal characteristic of the *St. John Passion* is its symmetry, which is especially evident in the group of movements that culminate with Jesus' crucifixion. Audrey Wong and Norm Proctor write:

The work is flanked by two massive choruses, the opening "Herr, unser Herrscher," a complex and compelling invocation, and the ending "Ruht wohl," a sweet and lingering grave side parting. Within this framework Bach transcends mere sequence of individual numbers by arranging musically similar choruses symmetrically around a central chorale. Nine choral movements, the last four mirroring the first four, revolve around the pivot point in the drama, the height of the psycho-emotional conflict, when Pilate searches for a way to release Christ while the high priests scream for Christ to die.

Here and throughout the work, Bach pairs off choral movements that share similar texts or sentiments. The music with which the soldiers mockingly hail the King of the Jews reappears when the priests demand that Pilate "write not that he is King of the Jews." A more ironic pairing is Bach's choice of the same chorale tune to contemplate first Peter's thoughtlessly denying his master and then Jesus's thoughtfully providing for his mother.¹⁰

More details about this aspect of the work appear below, in the introduction to Part II of the work.

One of the criticisms leveled against the *St. John Passion* in recent years is its apparent anti-Jewish sentiments. The symmetry produced by the "terrifying repetitions" of "Crucify, crucify!" and the text's repeated negative references to the "Jews," could lead one to that conclusion. But as Michael Marissen points out in his book, *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion*¹¹ Bach made numerous compositional choices that suggest Bach intended no such interpretation. More fundamentally, the libretto, generally reflecting Lutheran theology of Bach's day, lays the blame for Jesus' death on all of humanity, and presents the cross as divine victory.

Part I

(Note: For the convenience of readers using music scores employing the older numbering system rather than the one used in the new collected edition, movement numbers are given according to both schemes whenever they differ.)¹²

Part I of the *St. John Passion* encompasses Jesus' betrayal, his appearance before the high priest, Caiaphas, and Peter's remorse after his denial of Christ. The opening chorus is a magnificent da capo movement in G minor, whose text begins with an allusion to Psalm 8: "O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" Despite the positive sentiment of the opening words, the mood is ominous. A static bass line pulses relentlessly while the violins play buzzing circular figures of sixteenth notes and the woodwinds play harmonic suspensions in longer note values. After a buildup of eighteen measures the choir enters with a threefold cry of "Herr" ("Lord"), reminiscent of the "Sanctus" calls of the seraphim in Isaiah 6:3, then take up the circular sixteenth-note figure with the strings. An imitative section for the voices follows at measure 33. Here the instrumental roles are reversed: the bass instruments now play the circular figure, while the strings interject jabbing eighth notes. Then follow the words that are key to understanding a central theme of this Passion setting: "Show us through your Passion that you, the true Son of God, at all times, even in the greatest abasement, have been glorified." The idea that Christ's crucifixion was also his glorification is a central concept in this work. Historically, it relates to Luther's theology of the cross. Many of Bach's compositions reflect it. The idea also explains an apparent contradiction: while John's Gospel (more than any of the other Gospels) emphasizes Jesus' divinity, its portrayal of the trial and death of Jesus (and thus also Bach's *St. John Passion*) is vividly human.

The entire B section of the opening chorus is a marvel of harmonic tension, which finally finds resolution in D major. Thereupon the opening section in G minor returns.

1. Chorus

Herr, unser Herrscher,
dessen Ruhm
in allen Landen herrlich ist!
Zeig uns durch deine Passion,
daß du, der wahre Gottessohn,
zu aller Zeit,
auch in der größten Niedrigkeit,
verherrlicht worden bist.

Lord, our sovereign,
whose renown
is glorious in all lands!
Show us by your Passion
that you, the true Son of God,
were glorified
at all times,
even in the greatest abasement.

As the narrator begins his account the listener is immediately submersed in human conflict: the inflamed rabble, led by the treacherous Judas, comes to arrest Jesus, who responds with surprising composure.

2a. (2.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Jesus ging mit seinen Jüngern über den Bach Kidron, da war ein Garten, darein ging Jesus und seine Jünger. Judas, aber, der ihn verriet, wußte den Ort auch, denn Jesus versammelte sich oft daselbst mit seinen Jüngern. Da nun Judas zu sich hatte genommen die Schar und der Hohenpriester und Pharisäer Diener, kommt er dahin mit Fackeln, Lampen und mit Waffen. Als nun Jesus wußte alles, was ihm begegnen sollte, ging er hinaus und sprach zu ihnen: Wen suchet ihr? Sie antworten ihm:

Jesus went with his disciples over the brook Kidron: a garden was there, which Jesus entered and his disciples. But Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place also, for Jesus and his disciples often gathered there. When Judas had assembled around him the cohort and the servants of the high priests and Pharisees, he came there with torches, lanterns, and with weapons. Then when Jesus knew all things that were to come upon him, he went out and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him:

The crowd, apparently not recognizing Jesus, answers with a threefold repetition of Jesus' name, mirroring the "Lord, Lord, Lord" of the opening chorus. With the Oboe I acting as stimulus, the crowd retorts with menacingly abrupt jabs. The melodic movement drives toward the word "Nazareth," as if to emphasize the stigma of coming from such a lowly town, perhaps alluding to the proverb "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:46) The movement is short and fast-paced, and the action continues without pause.

2b. (3.) Chorus

Jesum von Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth.

2c. (4.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Jesus spricht zu ihnen: Ich bins. Judas aber, der ihn verriet, stund auch bei ihnen. Als nun Jesus zu ihnen sprach: Ich bins, wichen sie zurücke und fielen zu Boden. Da fragete er sie abermal: Wen suchet ihr? Sie aber sprachen:

Jesus said to them, "I am the one." But Judas, who betrayed him, also stood there among them. Now when Jesus said to them, "I am the one!" they shrank backward and fell to the ground. Then he asked them a second time, "Whom do you seek?" They answered:

When Jesus repeats his question, the mob answers as before, whereupon Jesus argues for the release of the other hostages.

2d. (5.) Chorus

Jesum von Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth.

2e. (6.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Jesus antwortete: Ich hab's euch gesagt, daß ichs sei, suchet ihr denn mich, so lasset diese gehen!

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he; if you are seeking me, then let these go!"

Jesus' concern for others over himself is observed wonderingly by the chorus and internalized. The hymn interpolated here is, in a sense, an interruption of the narrator's thought. While the mood is serious—even lamenting—the chorale ends with the brightness of a major chord, suggesting that the ultimate effect of these events will be positive.

3. (7.) Chorale

**O große Lieb,
O Lieb ohn alle Maße,
die dich gebracht
auf diese Marterstraße!
Ich lebte mit der Welt
in Lust und Freuden,
und du mußt leiden.**

O great love,
O love without measure,
which brought you
upon this martyr's road!
I lived with the world
in pleasure and joy,
and you must suffer.

While Jesus concerns himself with the safety of his disciples, Peter tries to defend him. But Jesus rejects his help, heals the injured enemy, and declares that these events have been allowed by God the Father.

4. (8.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Auf daß das Wort erfüllet würde, welches er sagte: Ich habe der keine verloren, die du mir gegeben hast. Da hatte Simon Petrus ein Schwert und zog es aus und schlug nach des Hohenpriesters Knecht und hieb ihm sein recht Ohr ab; und der Knecht hieß Malchus. Da sprach Jesus zu Petro: Stekke dein Schwert in die Scheide! Soll ich den Kelch nicht trinken, den mir mein Vater gegeben hat?

So that the word might be fulfilled which he had spoken, "I have not lost one of those whom you have given me." Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck at the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear; and the servant was named Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword in its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that my Father has given me?"

In contrast to the impulsive actions of Peter, the chorus commits itself to yielding to the unfathomable will of God. In the original Bach source, only the first phrase of the text is given, suggesting that the hymn was familiar enough to be rendered by memory.

5. (9.) Chorale

**Dein Will gescheh, Herr Gott,
zugleich auf Erden
wie im Himmelreich.
Gib uns Geduld in Leidenszeit,
gehorsam sein in Lieb und Leid;**

Your will be done, Lord God,
on earth
as it is done in heaven.
Give us patience in time of suffering,
obedience in weal and woe;

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| <p>wehr und steur allem Fleisch und Blut, Das wider deinen Willen tut!</p> | <p>restrain and steer all flesh and blood that works against your will!</p> |
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After Jesus is bound and brought before the religious officials, the high priest ironically utters a theologically profound statement: it would be better that one man perished than a whole nation.

6. (10.) Recitative (Evangelist)

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| <p><i>Die Schar aber und der Oberhauptmann und die Diener der Juden nahmen Jesum und bunden ihn und fuhreten ihn aufs erste zu Hannas, der war Kaiphass Schwäher, welcher des Jahres Hoherpriester war. Es war aber Kaiphass, der den Juden riet, es wäre gut, daß ein Mensch würde umbracht für das Volk.</i></p> | <p>But the cohort and the captain, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus and bound him, and led him away at first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now it was this same Caiaphas who counseled that it would be well that one man perish for the people.</p> |
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With an accompaniment of imitatively intertwining oboes and an instrumental bass that doubles back on itself (both of which probably suggest the binding of Jesus' hands), the alto presents the first aria of the Passion—a da capo aria of great pathos in which the paradoxically beneficial effects of the transpiring events are considered.

7. (11.) Alto Aria

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| <p>Von den Strikken meiner Sünden mich zu entbinden, wird mein Heil gebunden. Mich von allen Lasterbeulen völlig zu heilen, läßt er sich verwunden.</p> | <p>From the bands of my sins, to unbind me, is my Salvation bound. From all my iniquitous boils fully to heal me, he lets himself be wounded.</p> |
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8. (12.) Recitative (Evangelist)

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| <p><i>Simon Petrus aber folgete Jesu nach und ein ander Jünger.</i></p> | <p>But Simon Peter followed Jesus, and another disciple.</p> |
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After we are told that Peter is still following his master, we are treated to a dance-like aria in which the soprano addresses Jesus directly, affirming a commitment to follow him with joy. Set in triple meter (whose effect is heightened by a bass often playing off-beats only) with an accompaniment of flutes, the aria provides welcome relief from the tension of the preceding movements. Because the lines imitate each other, “‘Ich folge dir gleichfalls’ can be interpreted as a lively, if strictly imitative, *passepied* [a baroque dance] but also as a literal illustration of the idea of *imitatio Christi*.”¹³

9. (13.) Soprano Aria

Ich folge dir gleichfalls
mit freudigen Schritten,
und lasse dich nicht,
mein Leben, mein Licht.
Befördre den Lauf
und höre nicht auf
selbst an mir zu ziehen,
zu schieben, zu bitten.

I follow you likewise
with joyful footsteps,
and will not leave you,
my life, my light.
Assist my course,
and do not cease
to draw me,
to spur me, to call me.

A long dramatic narration, in which Jesus, Peter, a maid, and a servant sing their respective roles, describes the first interrogation by the religious officials. Peter's cowardly denial of knowing Jesus is contrasted with Jesus' majestic words, "I have taught openly before the world . . . and have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard me!" A shivering Peter, meanwhile, still wanting to stay near his master, warms himself at the fire in the courtyard with the others. An interesting example of Bach's rhetorical mastery occurs at the text "The officers and the servants had made a fire of coals, for it was cold, and were standing and warming themselves," where the narrator's voice first rises abruptly for "cold" and then shivers on the word "warming."

10. (14.) Recitative (Evangelist, Maid, Peter, Jesus, and Servant)

Derselbige Jünger war dem Hohenpriester bekannt und ging mit Jesu hinein in des Hohenpriesters Palast. Petrus aber stund draußen vor der Tür. Da ging der andere Jünger, der dem Hohenpriester bekannt war, hinaus, und redete mit der Türhüterin und führte Petrum hinein. Da sprach die Magd, die Türhüterin, zu Petro: Bist du nicht dieses Menschen Jünger einer? Er sprach: Ich bins nicht. Es stunden aber die Knechte und Diener und hatten ein Kohlfew'r gemacht (denn es war kalt), und wärmten sich. Petrus aber stund bei ihnen und wärmte sich.

Aber der Hohenpriester fragte Jesum um seine Jünger und um seine Lehre. Jesus antwortete ihm: Ich habe frei, öffentlich geredet vor der Welt. Ich habe allezeit gelehret in der Schule und in dem Tempel, da alle Juden zusammenkommen, und habe nichts im Verborgnen geredt. Was fragest du mich darum? Frage die darum, die gehört haben, was ich zu ihnen geredet habe! Siehe, dieselbigen wissen, was ich gesaget habe. Als er

That disciple was known to the high priest, and he went with Jesus into the high priest's palace. But Peter stood outside at the door. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl that watched the door, and brought Peter inside. Then the maid watching the door said to Peter, "Are you not one of this person's disciples?" He said, "I am not." But the officers and the servants had made a fire of coals, for it was cold, and were standing and warming themselves. Peter also stood among them and warmed himself.

But the high priest asked Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly before the world. I have taught constantly in the school and in the temple, where all the Jews come together, and have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard me about what I said to them. Look, they know what I said!" But when he said these things one of the servants who stood nearby struck him in the face and said, "Should you answer the high priest this way?" But Jesus said, "If I have spoken wickedly,

aber solches redete, gab der Diener einer, die dabeistunden, Jesu einen Bakkenstreich und sprach: Solltest du dem Hohenpriester also antworten? Jesus aber antwortete: Hab ich übel geredt, so beweise es, daß es böse sei; hab ich aber recht geredt, was schlägest du mich? prove it; but if I have spoken correctly, why do you strike me?"

The chorus immediately internalizes the action, concluding that the blame lies ultimately not with these religious leaders but with the sins of all humanity.

11. (15.) Chorale

**Wer hat dich so geschlagen,
mein Heil, und dich mit Plagen
so übel zugericht'?**
**Du bist ja nicht ein Sünder,
wie wir und unsre Kinder,
von Missetaten weißt du nicht.**

Who struck you in this way,
my Salvation; and with torment
treated you so badly?
For you are no sinner
like us and our children;
you know nothing of evildoing.

**Ich, ich und meine Sünden,
die sich wie Körnlein finden
des Sandes an dem Meer,
die haben dir erreget
das Elend, das dich schläget,
und das betrübte Marterheer.**

I, I and my sins,
which are as many as the grains
of sand on the seashore,
they have brought you
the misery that has struck you,
and the miserable band of torturers.

After Jesus is sent away for further interrogation, Peter faces his second test. This time he is confronted by several bystanders who hound him with their accusations.

12a. (16.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Und Hannas sandte ihn gebunden zu dem Hohenpriester Kaiphas. Simon Petrus stund und wärmete sich; da sprachen sie zu ihm:

Now Annas sent Jesus bound to the high priest Caiaphas. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Then they said to him:

Bach's setting is brilliant: the hissing questions come ever quicker, nipping at the beleaguered Peter from all directions.

12b. (17.) Chorus

Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer?

Are you not one of his disciples?

When Peter denies Christ a third time the cock crows, and he suddenly remembers Jesus' warning. Realizing what he has done, he collapses in remorse. The scene is one of the most memorable moments in the work. While the Evangelist's narration to this point has been expressive but straightforward, it now abandons all objectivity—the highly chromatic line

for the text “und weinete bitterlich” (all twelve chromatic tones are included in the vocal part) making Peter’s anguish palpable to the listener. That this text does not belong to the Gospel of John but was borrowed from Matthew suggests that Bach may have had a keen interest in it.

12c. (18.) Recitative (Evangelist, Peter, and Servant)

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| <i>Er leugnete aber und sprach: Ich bins nicht. Spricht des Hohenpriesters Knecht' einer, ein Gefreundter des, dem Petrus das Ohr abgehauen hatte: Sahe ich dich nicht im Garten bei ihm? Da verleugnete Petrus abermal, und also bald kräheete der Hahn. Da gedachte Petrus an die Worte Jesu, und ging hinaus und weinete bitterlich.</i> | But he denied it and said, “I am not.” Then one of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Then Peter denied it again, and immediately the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered Jesus’ words, and went outside, and wept bitterly. |
|---|---|

In a technically demanding aria for tenor and string orchestra, the shattered narrator gives reign to absolute desperation, for Peter’s act is now appropriated as his own. The music is full of dramatic leaps, jabbing rhythms, and sighing figures.

13. (19.) Tenor Aria

| | |
|---|---|
| Ach, mein Sinn, wo willst du endlich hin, wo soll ich mich erquicken? Bleib ich hier, oder wünsch ich mir Berg und Hügel auf den Rücken? Bei der Welt ist gar kein Rat, und im Herzen stehn die Schmerzen meiner Missetat, weil der Knecht den Herrn verleugnet hat. | O my spirit, where will you finally go? Where do I find comfort? Do I stay here? Or call on mountain and hill to bury me? This world offers no counsel, and in my heart I face the agony of my transgression, for the servant has denied his lord. |
|---|---|

In the chorale that concludes Part I the chorus once again joins the action directly, commenting on Peter’s failure to remember Christ’s warning that he would deny him three times. The words “one earnest look” allude to the denial account in the Gospel of Luke, which alone of the four Gospels reports that after the cock crowed, “the Lord turned and looked at Peter.”

14. (20.) Chorale

| | |
|--|--|
| Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück, seinen Gott verneinet, der doch auf ein' ernsten Blick bitterlichen weinet. Jesu, blikke mich auch an, wenn ich nicht will büßen; | Peter, not thinking back, denies his God, but upon one earnest look, weeps bitterly, Jesus, look also at me when I am slow to repent; |
|--|--|

wenn ich Böses hab getan,
rühre mein Gewissen!

when I have done some evil
stir my conscience!

Part II

Part II, which came after the sermon in Bach's day, takes us through the remaining horrible events: the interrogation, flogging, and, finally, crucifixion of Jesus. The most important formal feature of Part II (already mentioned earlier) is the symmetrical shape of a central complex of choruses, recitatives, and arias, in which a central hymn-like movement is framed by paired outer movements. Symmetrical design is evident on more than one level, as the following diagram demonstrates.

Chorus (18b [29]): Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam!

Recitative (18c [30]): Barrabas aber war ein Mörder

Bass Arioso (19 [31]): Betrachte, meine Seel

Aria (20 [32]): Erwäge

Recitative (21a [33]): Und die Kriegsknechte

Chorus (21b [34]) Sei begrüßet

Recitative (21c [35]): Und gaben ihn Backenstrieche

Chorus (21d [36]): Kreuzige, kreuzige!

Recitative (21e [37]): Pilatus sprach zu ihnen

Chorus (21f [38]): Wir haben ein Gesetz

Recitative (21g [39]): Da Pilatus das Wort hörte

“Chorale” (22 [40]): Durch dein Gefängnis

Recitative (23a [41]): Die Juden aber schrieen

Chorus (23b [42]): Lässest du diesen los

Recitative (23c [43]): Da Pilatus das Wort hörte

Chorus (23d [44]): Weg, weg mit dem

Recitative (23e [45]): Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen

Chorus (23f [46]): Wir haben keinen König

Recitative (23g [47]): Da überantwortete er ihn

Bass Aria and Chorus (24 [48]) Eilt, ihr angefochten Seelen

Recitative (25a [49]): Allda kreuzigten sie ihn

Chorus (25b [50]) Schreibe nicht

Robin Leaver calls the central “chorale” movement the “heart and focus of the entire work.” It might more accurately be called a “quasi-chorale” because the text is not a chorale text. Nevertheless, by setting the words to a well-known chorale melody, Bach gives the movement the liturgical weight of a chorale—a corporate expression of the congregation.

Why is this text so important that Bach would frame it with the “crucify” statements of the mob, as if imprisoned by the cries? Apparently, for Bach, the words captured “the essential meaning [of] the Passion story . . . that Jesus’ submission to earthly bondage released humanity from eternal bondage.”¹⁴

Bach often used arch form (palindromic symmetry) to structure his works. Examples include the motet “Jesu, meine Freude,” Cantatas 75 and 76 (the first two cantatas Bach presented after arriving in Leipzig), and the *Mass in B Minor*, among others. In such works Bach evidently used arch form to draw attention to a central “keystone” movement, which often also functions as a turning point—a fulcrum. In literary and theological terms the central movement reveals the heart or “crux” of the matter. Arch form is therefore essentially chiasmic, the movements forming the Greek letter *chi* (X):

A B C
D
C B A

When comparing instances of chiasmic form in Bach’s works we find that the central movements often mark a place where antithetical text elements meet; a turning point where paradoxical elements are resolved through a process of inversion. In theological terms it is the “cross principle”: as Christ gained victory through his death so Christian believers are exalted through cross-bearing. Listeners in Bach’s day would have known that the formulation of the concept originated with Jesus, who taught his disciples, “Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone, but if it die it produces much fruit”¹⁵ and “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”¹⁶

Part II of the *St. John Passion* begins with a chorale that hints at the paradox of the cross. Its primary focus, however, is the rank injustice of the preceding events. The simple hymn serves as a banner for the entire second part.

15. (21.) Chorale

**Christus, der uns selig macht,
kein Bö's' hat begangen,
der ward für uns in der Nacht
als ein Dieb gefangen,
geführt vor gottlose Leut
und fälschlich verklaget,
verlacht, verhöhnt und verspeit,
wie denn die Schrift saget.**

Christ, through whom we are blest,
knew no evildoing.
He for us was in the night
like a thief arrested,
led before a godless throng
and falsely accused,
laughed at, scoffed at, spat on,
as it says in the scriptures.

Now the case is transferred to Roman authority and Pilate comes on stage.

16a. (22.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Da führeten sie Jesum von Kaiphas vor das Richthaus, und es war frühe. Und sie gingen nicht in das Richthaus, auf daß sie nicht unrein würden, sondern Ostern essen möchten. Da ging Pilatus zu ihnen heraus und sprach: Was bringet ihr für Klage wider diesen Menschen? Sie antworteten und sprachen zu ihm:

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the courthouse, and it was early. And they did not enter the courthouse, lest they become defiled, for they wanted to eat the Passover. Then Pilate went out to them, and said, "What charges do you bring against this person?" They answered and said to him:

The mob hardly waits for Pilate to finish speaking and its response begs the question. The crowd's increasing determination can be heard in the chromatically ascending "stalking" motive of the voices, and the threat of crucifixion in the ♩ "crucify" motive, which appears in the latter part of the movement.

16b. (23.) Chorus

Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter, wir hätten dir ihn nicht überantwortet.

If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have brought him before you.

Pilate tries to extricate himself by deferring to religious law, but the mob responds, "We may not put someone to death." In this way we learn for the first time that Jesus is being accused of a capital crime.

16c. (24.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen: So nehmet ihr hin und richtet ihn nach eurem Gesetze! Da sprachen die Jüden zu ihm:

Then Pilate said to them, "So take him and judge him according to your law!"
Then the Jews said to him:

Again Bach connects narrative recitative and choral outburst, underlining the intensity of the exchange. The "stalking" motive returns, while the flutes and first violins play continuous, leaping sixteenths, denoting the increased agitation of the accusers.

16d. (25.) Chorus
Wir dürfen niemand töten.

We are not allowed to put anyone to death.

At this point the St. John Gospel account stresses again the preordained nature of these events. Pilate questions Jesus regarding his kingship and Jesus answers majestically, "My kingdom is not of this world." When he continues, "If my kingdom were of this world my servants would fight . . ." the agitated style of the previous movement reappears briefly in both vocal and accompanying parts, effectively highlighting the contrast between human and divine perspectives. Since Jesus claims an otherworldly kingdom, Pilate now has no excuse.

16e. (26.) Recitative (Evangelist, Pilate, and Jesus)

Auf daß erfüllet würde das Wort Jesu, welches er sagte, da er deutete, welches Todes er sterben würde. Da ging Pilatus wieder hinein in das Richthaus und rief Jesu und sprach zu ihm: Bist du der Jüden König? Jesus antwortete: Redest du das von dir selbst, oder habens dir andere von mir gesagt? Pilatus antwortete: Bin ich ein Jude? Dein Volk und die Hohenpriester haben dich mir überantwortet; was hast du getan? Jesus antwortete: Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt; wäre mein Reich von dieser Welt, meine Diener würden darob kämpfen, daß ich den Jüden nicht überantwortet würde; aber, nun ist mein Reich nicht von dannen.

So that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he had spoken, when he had indicated by what manner of death he would die. Then Pilate entered the courthouse again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this of yourself, or have others said this to you of me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your people and the high priests have given you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world my servants would fight to defend it, so that I would not be delivered over to the Jews! But now my kingdom is not from thence.

The choir takes up the theme of Christ's kingship in two stanzas of a hymn. Beginning as it does with the divine appellation, "Ach großer König," this movement parallels the earlier chorale, "O große Lieb." To stress the connection between the two, Bach uses the same chorale tune for both texts.

17. (27.) Chorale
**Ach großer König,
groß zu allen Zeiten,
wie kann ich gnugsam
diese Treu ausbreiten?
Keins Menschen Herze
mag indes ausdenken,
was dir zu schenken.**

O mighty king,
mighty through all ages,
how can I fitly
proclaim this faithfulness?
No human heart
can ever conceive
what to give you.

**Ich kann's mit meinen Sinnen
nicht erreichen,**

With all my faculties I can
not conceive

**womit doch dein Erbarmen
zu vergleichen.
Wie kann ich dir denn
deine Liebestaten
im Werk erstatten?**

what might compare
with your compassion.
How then could I,
repay your deeds of love,
with works?

As Pilate continues to press him for answers, Jesus turns the conversation to the issue most fundamental to the question of his identity and the trial at hand: integrity and the honest search for truth. Pilate, realizing that he has an innocent man on his hands, seeks to release him. However, his offer of amnesty for the so-called King of the Jews simply enrages the crowd and they shout that they would rather have the release of a notorious criminal named Barabbas.

18a. (28.) Recitative (Evangelist, Pilate, and Jesus)

Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm: So bist du dennoch ein König? Jesus antwortete: Du sagsts, ich bin ein König. Ich bin dazu geboren und in die Welt kommen, daß ich die Wahrheit zeugen soll. Wer aus der Wahrheit ist, der höret meine Stimme. Spricht Pilatus zu ihm: Was ist Wahrheit?

Und da er das gesaget, ging er wieder hinaus, zu den Jüden und spricht zu ihnen: Ich find keine Schuld an ihm. Ihr habt aber eine Gewohnheit, daß ich euch einen losgebe: wollt ihr nun, daß ich euch der Jüden König losgebe? Da schriegen sie wieder allesamt und sprachen:

Then Pilate said to him, "So you are nevertheless a king?" Jesus answered, "You say, I am a king. For that I was born and have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Whoever is of the truth hears my voice. Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

And when he said this he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no fault in him. But you have a custom, that I release one person to you: do you wish for me to release to you the king of the Jews?" But again they all shouted and said:

Bach's setting of the crowd's retort is short and effective with its jabbing vocal lines and hectic obbligato played by Flutes I and II, Oboe I, and Violin I.

18b. (29.) Chorus

Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam!

Not this one but Barabbas!

From the chorus Bach plunges directly into a recitative. That he wanted the dramatic momentum maintained at this point is clear from the final notes of the obbligato and bass instruments, which are sustained, providing a bridge between the two movements. In the recitative the narrator first explains the egregiousness of the crowd's choice; then, with a technically demanding flurry of notes, he paints a vivid picture of the flogging ordered by Pilate.

| | |
|---|---|
| 18c. (30.) Recitative (Evangelist) <i>Barrabas aber war ein Mörder. Da nahm Pilatus Jesum und geißelte ihn.</i> | Barabbas, however, was a murderer. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. |
|---|---|

From a dramatic perspective, the following bass arioso marks the first moment of acquiescence. It is distinctive for its accompaniment: the motoric rhythms of a plucked lute and intermittently sounding bass—like the ticking of a clock—suggest resignation, a mood accentuated by softly sighing strings (played by muted violins or viola d’amores). Concerning this instrumentation Marion Metcalf notes that the lute was considered antiquated in Bach’s time, and that “this particular combination of instruments and voice is unique in what survives of Bach’s music.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, lutes were apparently used as continuo instruments in Leipzig’s church music and are specified in at least one other cantata.¹⁸

19. (31.) Bass Arioso

| | |
|--|---|
| Betrachte, meine Seel, mit ängstlichem Vergnügen, mit bitterer Lust und halb beklemmtem Herzen dein höchstes Gut in Jesu Schmerzen, wie dir auf Dornen, so ihn stechen, die Himmelsschlüsselblumen blühn! Du kannst viel süße Frucht von seiner Wermut brechen, drum sieh ohn Unterlaß auf ihn! | Consider, my soul, with fearful pleasure, with bitter delight and half constricted heart, your greatest good in Jesus’ suffering; how for you the thorns that pierce him, bloom with heaven’s primroses! You can gather much sweet fruit amongst his wormwood, so look unceasingly upon him! |
|--|---|

In a coloratura da capo aria for tenor, the listener is reminded that these horrible events will end in blessing. The point is made in typically graphic baroque manner: the streaked blood stains on Jesus’ back are compared to the rainbow of promise after the flood in Noah’s day. The aria is much longer than the other ones in the *St. John Passion*, suggesting that Bach considered it of primary significance.

20. (32.) Tenor Aria

| | |
|--|---|
| Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rücken in allen Stücken dem Himmel gleiche geht, daran, nachdem die Wasserwogen von unsrer Sündflut sich verzogen, der allerschönste Regenbogen als Gottes Gnadenzeichen steht. | Ponder, how his bloodied back, in every way is like the heavens, on which after the watery billows of our sin’s flood have subsided, the most beautiful rainbow appears, as a token of God’s grace. |
|--|---|

Having tortured him, the Roman soldiers begin to taunt Jesus, prancing around him in a mockingly playful dance for voices and instruments. The dance ends abruptly with further violence as they hit him in the face.

21a. (33.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Und die Kriegsknechte flochten eine Krone von Dornen und satzten sie auf sein Haupt und legten ihm ein Purpurkleid an und sprachen: And the soldiers plaited a crown out of thorns, and set it on his head, and put a robe of purple on him, and said:

21b. (34.) Chorus

Sei begrüßet, lieber Jüdenkönig! We hail you, beloved King of the Jews!

Attempting to appeal to the humanity of the crowd, Pilate presents the innocent victim, now costumed in crown and robe, to the crowd. But the mob is bloodthirsty, and will have none of it.

21c. (35.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Und gaben ihm Bakkenstreich. Da ging Pilatus wieder heraus und sprach zu ihnen: Sehet, ich führe ihn heraus zu euch, daß ihr erkennet, daß ich keine Schuld an ihm finde. And they hit him in the face. Then Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I bring him out to you, so that you know that I find no fault in him."

Also ging Jesus heraus und trug eine Dornenkrone und Purpurkleid. Und er sprach zu ihnen: Sehet, welch ein Mensch! Da ihn die Hohenpriester und die Diener sahen, schrieen sie und sprachen: So Jesus went out wearing a crown of thorns and a robe of purple. And Pilate said to them, "Behold, the man!" When the high priests and servants saw him, they screamed and said:

Bach's musical portrayal of the enraged mob's response incorporates subtle complexities. Beyond a surface effect of sheer agitation, he encapsulates the idea of crucifixion by means of chiastic devices: invertible counterpoint (in which the ♯♯ "kreuzige" motive and a linear figure consisting of two sinuously clashing parallel lines exchange places) and motivic inversion (in which the primary motive appears in mirror form).

21d. (36.) Chorus

Kreuzige, kreuzige! Crucify, crucify!

In an apparent bluff, Pilate tells the accusers they will have to carry out the deed themselves.

21e. (37.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Pilatus sprach zu ihnen: Nehmet ihr ihn hin und kreuziget ihn; denn ich finde keine Schuld an ihm! Die Juden antworteten ihm: Pilate said to them, "You take him away and crucify him, for I find no fault in him." The Jews answered him:

For their reply Bach employs an emphatic rhythm with syncopation to provide "a rather pompous air to the assertion that Jesus has broken Jewish law; with minor rhythmic variations, the same theme in No. 23b (42) suggests a more frantic response to the possibility of Jesus' release."¹⁹ The form is that of fugue, in which voices follow each other in strict imitation. Because fugue form was often used to depict law or dogma, its appearance here is ironic, for the mob is anything but lawful in its inflexible fanaticism. Nevertheless, the crowd does get to the heart of the complaint: Jesus' claim to divinity.

21f. (38.) Chorus

Wir haben ein Gesetz, und nach dem Gesetz soll er sterben; denn er hat sich selbst zu Gottes Sohn gemacht. We have a law, and according to that law he must die, for he has made himself out to be God's son.

Pilate is now afraid, and when Jesus refuses to cower despite Pilate's threats he is frightened even more. Pilate's eventual determination to find a way to release his prisoner is portrayed by Bach in harmonies of utmost sweetness, as if to suggest that a happy outcome might yet be possible. However the music page is littered with sharp signs (in German the sharp sign is called "Kreuz," which is also the word for "cross") as if to say that it will never happen.

21g. (39.) Recitative (Evangelist, Pilate, and Jesus)

Da Pilatus das Wort hörete, fürchtet' er sich noch mehr und ging wieder hinein in das Richthaus, und sprach zu Jesu: Von wannen bist du? Aber Jesus gab ihm keine Antwort. Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm: Redest du nicht mit mir? Weißest du nicht, daß ich Macht habe, dich zu kreuzigen, und Macht habe, dich loszugeben? Jesus antwortete: Du hättest keine Macht über mich, wenn sie dir nicht wäre von oben herab gegeben; darum, der mich dir überantwortet hat, der hat's größ're Sünde. Von dem an trachtete Pilatus, wie er ihn losließe. Now when Pilate heard this he was even more frightened, and entered the courthouse again, and said to Jesus, "From where are you?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Do not know that I have the power to crucify you, and the power to release you?" Jesus replied, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above; therefore, he who delivered me up to you has the greater sin." From then on Pilate strove for a way to release him.

We come now to the central movement, which is, literally and figuratively, the crux of the matter—the theology of the cross in a nutshell. The hymn text relates directly to the theme expressed at the very outset of the work: “Show us by your Passion that you, the true Son of God, were glorified at all times, even in the greatest abasement.” From a dramatic point of view, too, this chorale is the pivotal point in the work. Until now there has still been hope that Jesus might be released. The mob, however, is uncontrollable in its murderous intent, and the turning point is reached.

22. (40.) Chorale

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn, muß uns die Freiheit kommen; Dein Kerker ist der Gnadenthron, die Freistatt aller Frommen; denn gingst du nicht die Knechtschaft ein, müßt unsre Knechtschaft ewig sein.</p> | <p>Through your captivity O Son of God, our freedom had to come; your prison is the throne of grace, the free state of all the godly; for had you not taken up servitude, our servitude would have been eternal.</p> |
|---|--|

The rabble now aggressively pushes its advantage, threatening Pilate with sibilant language that veritably hisses in anger.

23a. (41.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Die Juden aber schrieen und sprachen: But the Jews screamed and said:

23b. (42.) Chorus

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Lässest du diesen los, so bist du des Kaisers Freund nicht; denn wer sich zum Könige machet, der ist wider den Kaiser.</i></p> | <p>If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar, for whoever makes himself out to be a king is against Caesar.</p> |
|--|---|

Pilate is not cowed by the crowd. In a show of judicial authority he ironically presents Jesus as their king. In so doing he turns the accusers’ own argument against them, making them liable for treason themselves.

23c. (43.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Da Pilatus das Wort hörete, führete er Jesum heraus und satzte sich auf den Richtstuhl, an der Stätte, die da heißet: Hochpflaster, auf Ebräisch aber: Gabbatha. Es war aber der Rüsttag in Ostern, um die sechste Stunde, und er spricht zu den Juden: Sehet, das ist euer König! Sie schrieen aber:</i></p> | <p>When Pilate heard these words, he led Jesus out, and sat down on the seat of judgment, in a place called High Pavement, but in Hebrew called Gabbatha. It was about the sixth hour on the day of preparation for the Passover, and he said to the Jews, “Look, that is your king!” But they shouted:</p> |
|---|---|

In response, the frenzied crowd calls for crucifixion a second time. The “crucify” motive reappears, reminding us of the earlier statement. At the

end of the agitated movement the discord reaches a climax with the choral basses holding a high C # against clashing B #s and D #s in the other parts.

23d. (44.) Chorus

Weg mit dem, kreuzige ihn!

Away with him, crucify him!

23e. (45.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen: Soll ich euren König kreuzigen? Die Hohenpriester antworteten:

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The high priests answered:

After Pilate taunts them with a further reference to "Jesus their king" they shout their avowed allegiance to Caesar.

23f. (46.) Chorus

Wir haben keinen König denn den Kaiser.

We have no king but Caesar.

In a highly chromatic recitative (all twelve tones of the octave appear in the vocal part within six measures) the narrator describes Jesus' sentencing. Crucifixion was a particularly brutal form of execution and Bach sets the entire text very expressively; in particular, he gives the word "crucify" a striking melisma of great pathos.

23g. (47.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Da überantwortete er ihn, daß er gekreuziget würde. Sie nahmen aber Jesus und führten ihn hin. Und er trug sein Kreuz und ging hinaus zur Stätte, die da heißet Schädelstätt, welche heißet auf Ebräisch: Golgotha.

Then Pilate handed him over so that he might be crucified. But they took Jesus and led him away. And, carrying his cross, he went out to a place called Place of a Skull, which, in Hebrew, is called Golgotha.

Evidently the crowd immediately begins to disperse, eager to tell others of the verdict and the impending execution. Bach paints the picture vividly with unison figures that run up the scale. The exhortation to run to Golgotha is both literal and figurative. In the figurative sense, the soloist urges listeners, as human beings driven and assailed by cares, to run to the cross in faith. The text stresses what has been emphasized from the midpoint of the Passion on: the cross ultimately represents the means of salvation. Marion Metcalf writes, "In [this aria] Bach again reinforces the Easter message, as the bass soloist urges seekers of salvation, represented by the chorus asking 'where? where?,' to look [to] Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified."²⁰

24. (48.) Bass Aria and Chorus

Eilt, ihr angefochtenen Seelen,
 geht aus euren Marterhöhlen,
 eilt,
 Wohin?
 eilt nach Golgatha!
 Nehmet an des Glaubens Flügel,
 fliehet,
 Wohin?
 fliehet zum Kreuzeshügel,
 eure Wohlfahrt blüht allda!

Hasten, you souls assailed,
 leave your caves of torment,
 hasten,
 Where to?
 hasten to Golgotha!
 Take on the wings of faith,
 fly,
 Where to?
 fly to the cross's hill,
 your welfare blossoms there!

The actual crucifixion is told simply—without graphic description. More pointed is the writer's description of Pilate's parting jab at his unruly subjects: on Jesus' cross he hangs a taunting sign (in three languages) that combines a reference to Jesus' lowly origin with the facetiously bestowed royal title. To highlight the inscription's significance, Bach sets it majestically with a plagal ("Amen") cadence in A ♭ major.

25a. (49.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Allda kreuzigten sie ihn, und mit ihm zween andere zu beiden Seiten, Jesum aber mitten inne. Pilatus aber schrieb eine Überschrift, und satzte sie auf das Kreuz, und war geschrieben: "Jesus von Nazareth, der Jüden König." Diese Überschrift lasen viel Jüden, denn die Stätte war nahe bei der Stadt, da Jesus gekreuziget ist. Und es war geschrieben auf ebräische, griechische und lateinische Sprache. Da sprachen die Hohenpriester der Jüden zu Pilato:

There they crucified him, and with him two others on either side, Jesus between them. But Pilate wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It said: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews!" This inscription was read by many Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the town. And it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then the high priests of the Jews said to Pilate:

Of course the religious leaders object strenuously and suggest an alternative reading.

25b. (50.) Chorus

Schreibe nicht: der Jüden König, sondern daß er gesaget habe: Ich bin der Jüden König!

Do not write "The King of the Jews" but rather that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews!'"

Again Pilate asserts his authority.

25c. (51.) Recitative (Evangelist and Pilate)

Pilatus antwortet: Was ich geschrieben habe, das habe ich geschrieben.

Pilate replied, "What I have written, that I have written."

Providing some respite from the intensity of the foregoing exchange, the chorus sings a simple hymn that ponders the significance of Jesus' name and cross for the believer.

26. (52.) Chorale

**In meines Herzens Grunde,
dein Nam und Kreuz allein
funkelt all Zeit und Stunde,
drauf kann ich fröhlich sein.
Erschein mir in dem Bilde
zu Trost in meiner Not,
wie du, Herr Christ, so milde
dich hast geblut' zu Tod!**

In my heart's center
your name and cross alone
glows at all times and hours;
for this I can be joyful.
Appear to me in that image
(for comfort in my need)
of how you, Lord Christ, so gently
bled to death for us!

The four soldiers, considering Jesus as good as dead, divide his clothes among themselves.

27a. (53.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Die Kriegsknechte aber, da sie Jesum gekreuziget hatten, nahmen seine Kleider und machten vier Teile, einem jeglichen Kriegsknechte sein Teil, dazu auch den Rock. Der Rock aber war ungenähet, von oben an gewürket durch und durch. Da sprachen sie untereinander:

But the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, divided his garments in four equal portions, a portion for each of the soldiers, and also his coat. Now the coat had no seams but was woven through and through from end to end. So they said to one another:

Realizing that the coat is too precious to be cut, the soldiers decide to gamble for it. Bach's music rollicks along, the instruments perhaps depicting the rattling roll of dice. The competition becomes more intense. Finally, yelping with success, the soprano (the youngest one?) grabs the prize with glee.

27b. (54.) Chorus

Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen, sondern darum losen, wes er sein soll.

Let us not divide it, but draw lots for it to see whose it shall be.

In keeping with the Gospel writer's aim to depict these horrible events as divinely supervised, he notes that the soldiers' act was, in fact, a fulfillment of prophecy, and he quotes a passage from Psalm 22 to prove it. He then describes the attending women (which include three named Mary) and the disciples, who stand at the foot of the cross. Then he relates one of the most moving exchanges in the entire Passion account: in a weak voice Jesus asks the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (i.e., John, the Gospel writer himself) and his mother to care for each other when he is gone.

27c. (55.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Auf daß erfüllet würde die Schrift, die da saget: "Sie haben meine Kleider unter sich geteilet und haben über meinen Rock das Los geworfen." Solches taten die Kriegesknechte.

Es stund aber bei dem Kreuze Jesu seine Mutter und seiner Mutter Schwester, Maria, Kleophas Weib, und Maria Magdalena. Da nun Jesus seine Mutter sahe und den Jünger dabei stehen, den er lieb hatte, spricht er zu seiner Mutter: Weib, siehe, das ist dein Sohn! Darnach spricht er zu dem Jünger: Siehe, das ist deine Mutter!

So that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "They parted my raiment among them and cast lots for my coat." That is what the soldiers did.

Now standing beside the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Now when Jesus saw his mother and his beloved disciple standing by her, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, this is your son! Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, that is your mother!"

Emotionally spent, the chorus responds with a hymn of bittersweet simplicity. Bach uses the same tune here as in the earlier chorale, "Petrus, der nicht denkt zurrück." In this way he draws a comparison between Jesus' thoughtfulness—even in death—with Peter's thoughtlessness.

28. (56.) Chorale

**Er nahm alles wohl in acht
in der letzten Stunde,
seine Mutter noch bedacht,
setzt ihr ein' Vormunde.
O Mensch, mache Richtigkeit,
Gott und Menschen liebe,
stirb darauf ohn alles Leid,
und dich nicht betrübe!**

He took heed of everything
in his last hour,
thought yet of his mother,
assigning to her a guardian.
O man, act rightly,
love God and fellow man,
then die without sorrow,
and do not be distressed!

As Jesus nears his end the Gospel writer once again notes the prophetic nature of the transpiring events.

29. (57.) Recitative (Evangelist and Jesus)

Und von Stund an nahm sie der Jünger zu sich. Darnach, als Jesus wußte, daß schon alles vollbracht war, daß die Schrift erfüllet würde, spricht er: Mich dürstet! Da stund ein Gefäße voll Essigs. Sie fülleten aber einen Schwamm mit Essig und legten ihn um einen Isopen, und hielten es ihm dar zum Munde. Da nun Jesus den Essig genommen hatte, sprach er: Es ist vollbracht!

And from that hour on the disciple took her to himself. After that, when Jesus knew that everything had already been finished to fulfill scripture, he said, "I thirst!" A vessel full of vinegar stood there. They filled a sponge with vinegar and put it on a twig of hyssop, and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, "It is finished!"

The double meaning of the phrase, "It is finished" is taken up in a highly memorable aria that follows. Of this movement, Martin Geck writes:

Bach's utter centrality in the history of Western music is nowhere better illustrated than by the aria "Es ist vollbracht," the principal idea of which is derived from the tradition of the instrumental *tombeau* as scored for lute, harpsichord and viol and associated at least from the seventeenth century with the notion of commemorating the death of important individuals. . . . At the same time, however, the opening bars of the aria anticipate the *Klagender Gesang* ("Arioso dolente") of Beethoven's op. 110 Piano Sonata and the aria "Es ist genug" ("It is enough") from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.²¹

Andreas Glöckner writes:

[Bach] again breaks the rules of the traditional da capo aria. Instead of using the usual A-B-A form, in which the middle section produces a clear contrast by virtue of its reduced volume of sound, Bach applies the opposite strategy in this unusual movement. While the tone of the A section is intentionally subdued through the use of the chamber musical forces of viola da gamba and continuo, Bach accentuates a sharp contrast in the B section—fitting the text "Der Held aus Juda siegt mit Macht"—by calling for the entire string section of the orchestra, which he then augmented in 1749 by the addition of a *bassono grosso* (contrabassoon). The contrast is emphasized the more by the different tempo headings—"Molto Adagio" for the A section and "Vivace" for the B section.²²

The idea that Christ's death accomplished a preordained plan of salvation is made explicit in the movement, as the alto meditates on Christ's final words, "It is finished." Michael Marissen writes:

Bach's aria "Es ist vollbracht" (No. 30 [58]) projects Luther's theology of the cross most forcefully. At first it seems as though the notes simply contradict the words, since Jesus' cry of triumph is set as a somber dirge. But these are surface features. The aria is scored with an *obbligato* for a special instrument, the viola da gamba, a favorite solo instrument in French Baroque court music; and often the underlying rhythms are the ones cultivated in the majestic style of Louis XIV's court music and therefore widely imitated elsewhere. . . . Although it is notated in [this so-called] dotted style, [the] gamba music, owing to its slowness and smoothness, sounds somber. That is to say, only on the page, which listeners do not see, does the music appear majestic. As Bach's music has it, then, Jesus' majesty is "hidden" in its opposite, which is very much a Lutheran approach.

[By contrast] the middle section of this aria . . . [with its] fast repeated notes, an Italian Baroque convention for "militant" affects [i.e., emotional states] . . . is more what one would expect from a victorious

Christ. But the final notes spell a diminished chord, the most unstable harmony available in Bach's vocabulary. This middle section cannot stand formally closed. . . . It has to resolve somehow, and it does so right into the slow gamba music of the opening section again.²³

30. (58.) Alto Aria

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Es ist vollbracht! | It is finished! |
| O Trost für die gekränkten Seelen. | O comfort for all vexed souls. |
| Die Trauernacht, | The night of grieving |
| läßt nun die letzte Stunde zählen. | now sees its final hour. |
| Der Held aus Juda | The champion from Judah |
| siegt mit Macht, | triumphs mightily |
| und schließt den Kampf. | and ends the battle. |
| Es ist vollbracht. | It is finished. |

The actual death of Jesus is set very simply—the tenor soloist is given the challenge of conveying the utmost pathos in just nine notes.

31. (59.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Und neiget das Haupt und verschied. And bowed his head and was gone.

In a fascinating movement that combines a four-part chorale with a bass aria in the slowly rocking rhythm of the siciliano (a baroque dance with pastoral associations), we hear the inner struggle of the individual played out against the ecclesiastical response of the believing community.

32. (60.) Bass Aria and Chorus

| | |
|--|--|
| Mein teurer Heiland, laß dich fragen, | My dear Savior, give me answer, |
| Jesu, der du warest tot, | Jesus, you who once were dead, |
| da du nunmehr ans Kreuz geschlagen | since you were nailed upon the cross, |
| und selbst gesaget: es ist vollbracht, | and said yourself, "It is finished," |
| lebest nun ohn Ende, | now you live forever. |
| bin ich vom Sterben frei gemacht? | am I now freed from death? |
| in der letzten Todesnot | In the final pangs of death |
| nirgend mich hinwende | may I never turn elsewhere |
| Kann ich durch deine Pein und Sterben | Can I, through your pain and dying, |
| das Himmelreich ererben? | inherit the heavenly kingdom? |
| Ist aller Welt Erlösung da? | Is this the redemption of all the world? |
| als zu dir, | than to you, |
| der mich versühnt, | who have atoned for me, |
| o du lieber Herre! | O beloved Savior! |

| | |
|--|--|
| Du kannst vor Schmerzen zwar nichts sagen; Gib mir nur, was du verdient, doch neigest du das Haupt mehr ich nicht begehre! und sprichst stillschweigend: ja. | Indeed you cannot answer for pain; Grant me but what you have earned, yet you bow your head more I do not desire! to say, in silence, "Yes." |
|--|--|

Borrowed from the Gospel of Matthew, the earthquake scene that follows was apparently incorporated into the libretto at Bach's own wish. In both recitative and aria the composer paints a vivid picture in the instrumental lines of the quake and the rending of the temple veil, with shaking figures and a two-octave run that tears downward in thirty-second notes.

33. (61.) Recitative (Evangelist)

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Und siehe da, der Vorhang im Tempel zerriß in zwei Stück von oben an bis unten aus. Und die Erde erbebete, und die Felsen zerrissen, und die Gräber täten sich auf, und stunden auf viele Leiber der Heiligen.</i> | And behold, the veil in the temple was torn in two pieces, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were torn apart, and graves were opened, and the bodies of many saints arose. |
|---|---|

Musing that the cataclysmic events (which are now depicted even more explicitly in the instrumental lines) constitute nature's horrified response to the death of its creator, the tenor asks with great earnestness what the heart's response to Jesus' death should be.

34. (62.) Tenor Arioso

| | |
|---|---|
| Mein Herz, indem die ganze Welt bei Jesu Leiden gleichfalls leidet, die Sonne sich in Trauer kleidet, der Vorhang reißt, der Fels zerfällt, die Erde bebt, die Gräber spalten, weil sie den Schöpfer sehn erkalten, was willst du deines Ortes tun? | O my heart, now that all the world at Jesus' suffering likewise suffers: the sun shrouds itself in mourning, the veil tears, the rocks disintegrate, the earth shakes, the graves split open, because they see the Creator dying; what will you for your part do? |
|---|---|

It is the soprano who answers the tenor's question with an aria in F minor, a lament in which restless thirty-second notes, a throbbing bass figure (consisting of repeated eighth notes that begin after an initial eighth note rest on the downbeat of each measure), sighing gestures, and occasional pauses work together to produce a vivid portrayal of grief and anguish.

35. (63.) Soprano Aria

Zerfließe, mein Herze,
in Fluten der Zähren,
dem Höchsten zu Ehren!
Erzähle der Welt und dem
Himmel die Not:
dein Jesus ist tot!

Overflow, O my heart,
in torrents of tears,
to honor the Most High!
Tell earth
and heaven the dark tidings:
your Jesus is dead!

In a lengthy recitative by the Evangelist we encounter again the Gospel writer's concern to portray Jesus' crucifixion as a divine fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures, which are highlighted musically by Bach in passages marked "Adagio."

36. (64.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Die Jüden aber, die weil es der Rüsttag war, daß nicht die Leichname am Kreuze blieben den Sabbat über (denn desselbigen Sabbaths Tag war sehr groß), baten sie Pilatum, daß ihre Beine gebrochen und sie abgenommen würden. Da kamen die Kriegsknechte und brachen dem ersten die Beine und dem andern, der mit ihm gekreuziget war. Als sie aber zu Jesu kamen, da sie sahen, daß er schon gestorben war, brachen sie ihm die Beine nicht; sondern der Kriegsknechte einer eröffnete seine Seite mit einem Speer, und alsobald ging Blut und Wasser heraus.

Und der das gesehen hat, der hat es bezeuget, und sein Zeugnis ist wahr, und derselbige weiß, daß er die Wahrheit saget, auf das ihr gläubet. Denn solches ist geschehen, auf daß die Schrift erfüllet würde: "Ihr sollet ihm kein Bein zerbrechen." Und abermal spricht eine andere Schrift: "Sie werden sehen, in welchen sie gestochen haben."

But the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the body should not remain on the cross over the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a very high one), entreated Pilate to have their legs broken and they be taken down. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first one, and of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he had already died, they did not break his legs; instead, one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

And the one who saw this has borne record, and he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you may believe. For these things happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "You shall not break one of his legs." Again another scripture says, "They will behold the one whom they have pierced."

Here Bach reintroduces the chorale tune of *Christus der uns selig macht*, which began Part II of the Passion. In this way he comes full circle, inviting the listener to contemplate the parallel sentiments of the two hymns.

37. (65.) Chorale

**O hilf, Christe, Gottes Sohn,
durch dein bitter Leiden,
daß wir dir stets untertan
all Untugend meiden,
deinen Tod und sein Ursach
fruchtbarlich bedenken,**

Help, O Christ, God's Son,
through your bitter suffering,
that we, remaining subject to you al-
ways,
would avoid all wickedness;
would always contemplate beneficially

**dafür, wiewohl arm und schwach,
dir Dankopfer schenken!**

your death and its purpose; bring you
offerings of thanksgiving for it,
though they be poor and weak!

Having prayed for strength to overcome human weakness in the preceding chorale, the librettist now tells the account of Jesus' burial, in which two disciples—formerly too timid to come forward and be identified as such—play a central role.

38. (66.) Recitative (Evangelist)

Darnach bat Pilatum Joseph von Arimathea, der ein Jünger Jesu war (doch heimlich aus Furcht vor den Jüden), daß er möchte abnehmen den Leichnam Jesu. Und Pilatus erlaubete es. Dero wegen kam er und nahm den Leichnam Jesu herab.

Es kam aber auch Nikodemus, der vormals bei der Nacht zu Jesu kommen war, und brachte Myrrhen und Aloen unter einander bei hundert Pfunden. Da nahmen sie den Leichnam Jesu und bunden ihn in leinen Tücher mit Spezereien, wie die Jüden pflegen zu begraben. Es war aber an der Stätte, da er gekreuziget ward, ein Garte, und im Garten ein neu Grab, in welches niemand je gelegeet war. Dasselbst hin legten sie Jesum, um des Rüsttags willen der Jüden, dieweil das Grab nahe war.

Afterward, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus (but secretly, fearing the Jews), asked Pilate if he might take down Jesus' body. And Pilate allowed it. So he came and took down Jesus' body.

There came also Nicodemus, who had earlier come to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, a hundred pounds' weight. Then they took Jesus' body and wound it in linen cloths with spices, as is the Jewish manner of burial. Now at the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new grave, in which no one had ever been laid. There they laid Jesus, since it was the day of preparation, the grave being close by.

Following convention, and in the interest of large-scale symmetry, Bach ends the work with a major chorus, a gentle lullaby that contemplates Jesus being laid to rest in the tomb. The length of the movement suggests that Bach found the text particularly meaningful, made all the more poignant, perhaps, by memories of the many children he had personally laid to rest. Apparently the librettist considered the movement inconclusive, however. To expand on the Christian believer's hope, which lies ultimately not in Christ's death but in the resurrection, a final chorale was added, allowing the believing community to affirm its anticipation of this eschatological event.

39. (67.) Chorus

Ruht wohl,
ihr heiligen Gebeine,
die ich nun weiter nicht beweine,
ruht wohl,
und bringt auch mich zur Ruh.
Das Grab, so euch bestimmt ist
und ferner keine Not umschließt,
macht mir den Himmel auf
und schließt die Hölle zu.

Rest, well,
you sacred bones,
over which I shall no further weep.
Rest well,
and bring me also to rest.
The grave, destined for you,
and which no further pain encloses,
opens heaven for me,
and closes hell.

40. (68.) Chorale

**Ach Herr, laß dein lieb Engelein
am letzten End die Seele mein
in Abrahams Schoß tragen,
den Leib
in seim Schlafkämmerlein
gar sanft ohn einge Qual und Pein
ruhn bis am jüngsten Tage!
Alsdenn vom Tod erwecke mich,
daß meine Augen sehen dich
in aller Freud, o Gottes Sohn,
mein Heiland und Genadenthron!
Herr Jesu Christ, erhöre mich,
ich will dich preisen ewiglich!**

O Lord, let your little angel dear,
in the final end, carry my soul
into Abraham's bosom.
Let this body rest
in its little sleeping chamber,
quite softly, without any torment or pain,
until Judgment Day!
And then from death awaken me,
that my eyes may see you,
in full joy, O Son of God,
my Savior and my mercyseat!
Lord Jesus Christ, hear me,
and I will praise you eternally!

Notes

1. Werner Braun, "Passion. 6. Eighteenth Century," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 19:208.
2. Martin Geck, trans. Stewart Spencer, CD booklet, J. S. Bach, *Johannes-Passion*, Concentus musicus Wien (Nikolaus Harnoncourt, conductor), Teldek 9031-74862-2, pp. 14–15.
3. Robin Leaver, "Passion," in *Oxford Composer Companions: J. S. Bach*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 361.
4. Marion Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*," March 11, 2000, notes for the Alexandria Choral Society's 1985 performance of the *St. John Passion*, reprinted in remembrance of Marion R. Metcalf, formerly a member of the society, <http://www.alexchoralsociety.org/bachnotes.htm> (accessed June 23, 2004).
5. Andreas Glöckner, "Bach's *St. John Passion* and Its Different Versions," CD booklet, J. S. Bach, *St. John Passion*, Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart (Helmuth Rilling, conductor), Hänssler CD 92.075, pp. 68–69.
6. John Butt, "St. John Passion," in *Oxford Composer Companions: J. S. Bach*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 427.
7. Audrey Wong and Norm Proctor, "St. John Passion," July 7, 2003, http://www.bcg.org/Program_Notes/StJohn_694.html (accessed June 24, 2004).

8. Robin A. Leaver, "The Mature Vocal Works," *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 100; John Butt, "St. John Passion" in Boyd, *Oxford Composer Companions: J. S. Bach*, 427–28.
9. Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*."
10. Wong and Proctor, "St. John Passion."
11. Published by Oxford University Press, 1998.
12. The first number follows the numbering system used in the new critical edition of Bach's works: *Johann Sebastian Bach: Neue Bach-Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke (NBA)*, ed. Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Institut Göttingen, and Bach-Archiv Leipzig (Leipzig and Kassel, 1954–). The second number (in parentheses) follows the system used in the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (BWV); see Wolfgang Schmieder, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke von Johann Sebastian Bach*, rev. & expanded ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1990).
13. Geck, *Johannes-Passion*, 15.
14. Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*."
15. John 12:24, Revised Standard Version.
16. Matthew 16:24–25, Revised Standard Version.
17. Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*."
18. Karl Hochreither, trans. Melvin P. Unger, *Performance Practice of the Instrumental-Vocal Works of Johann Sebastian Bach* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 7.
19. Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*."
20. Metcalf, "J. S. Bach: *Johannes Passion*."
21. Geck, *Johannes-Passion*, 16.
22. Glöckner, "Bach's *St. John Passion*," 70.
23. Michael Marissen, *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 18–19.