

The cantata is in symmetrical form: two outer framing movements present prayers by the believing soul. Between these movements are two recitative-aria pairs. The first pair (nos. 2 & 3) presents the voice of Jesus, the second pair (nos. 4 & 5) presents dialogues between Jesus and the believing soul.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/5; BC A31

1. S. after Epiphany (BWV 154, 124, 32).

*Romans 12:1-61 (Christian duty: present yourselves as living sacrifices to God)

*Luke 2:41-52 (The twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple after his parents have lost him. See note.)

Librettist: Georg Christian Lehms (see note).

FP: 13 January 1726 (St. Nicholas)

See side notes regarding Bach's 3rd cycle of cantatas.

Instrumentation:

Ob
Vln I, II
Vla
SATB
Continuo, Organo

Pianoforte.

The text of the aria is in chiasmic rhyme scheme (ABC-CBA). Bach sets it in 3 groups, with many word repetitions: AB-CC-BA. He thus highlights the middle section (the "crux" of the matter), which presents the rhetorical question (marked with a phrygian cadence) of whether communion with Jesus can be lost.

Aria.

32/1. **Adagio.** (♩ = 56.)

•Voice of believing soul: Where shall I find thee, Jesus? (32/1).

1. Ob *mf*

Ritornello *p*

E minor
Strings play unvarying 3-note figure marked "piano e spiccato," producing a sense of resigned melancholy.

A7

3.

D major D# dim.7 E minor B7 B7 E minor

5.

Rising lines suggests yearning.

A minor D7 G major A7 G# dim.7 A minor B7

7.

cresc.

dim.

E minor A7 B major E minor E7 A minor E7 F major A minor D# dim.7 E minor

Soprano.

Text lines
1 & 2.
Rhyme: A-B

Lieb - - - ster Je - su,

Oboe imitates voice concertato-like.

lieb - - - ster

pp

E minor F# major B major E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

12.

Word painting: Sighing figures and chromaticism used to depict "mein Verlangen" (my desire/longing).

14.

Je - su, mein Ver - langen, mein Ver - lan - gen, sa - ge mir, wo find' ich dich? Wo,

E minor A7 D major D# dim.7 E minor iv6 V

Biblical allusion to Song of Solomon 3:1 [Bride]: "I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer."

15.

wo? Wo find' ich dich? Lieb - - - ster

D# dim.7 B7 E minor A7 D major F# major F#7

17.

Chromaticism used to depict mein "Verlangen" (my longing).

19.

Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen, mein Ver - lan - gen, sa - ge mir, wo find' ich dich? Lieb.

B minor B minor E7 A major C# minor A# dim.7 E minor B minor F#7

20.

- - - ster Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen, liebster Je - su, mein Ver.

B7 E7 A major A7 D major E7 D# dim.7 (F#7) A major E minor

cresc.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

22. *langen, sage mir, wo find' ich dich? Wo find' ich dich?* 24. *Soll ich*

Text lines 3 & 4.
Rhyme: C-C.

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

25. *dich so bald ver- lie- ren, sobald, so bald, und nicht fer- ner bei mir*

Rising duples reinforce idea of yearning.

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

27. *föh- ren, soll ich dich so bald ver- lie- ren* 29. *und nicht*

NBA: spüren

C# major F# major F#7 B major B7 E major E7 A minor

30. *fer- ner bei mir föhren, soll ich dich so bald ver- lie- ren, so bald, sobald ver-*

NBA: spüren Long rising lines by the oboe and singer.

(G7) C major C7 A7 D minor G7 E minor C# dim.7 D major D# dim.7

cresc.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

32.

lie - ren und nicht fer - ner bei mir **füh-ren**, nicht fer - ner

NBA: spüren

dim.

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

34.

bei mir **füh-ren?** Ach! mein Hort, er freu - -

NBA: spüren

Text lines 5 & 6.
Rhyme: B-A

B-flat major D minor E7 A minor A minor D7

36.

Text painting: Elaborate melisma for "gladden," the oboe responding with descending 32nds.

G major D7

38.

- e mich, lass dich höchst vergnügt um - fan - - gen, lass dich höchst ver.

Oboe plays halting, rising figure (see full score).

B7 E minor E minor A7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

Text painting: Melisma for "embrace."

Chromatic inflection for "ach."

40. *gnügt um - fan - - - - - gen; ach! mein Hort, er - freu - - -*

D major D# dim.7 E minor B7 B minor E major E7 (E7) E7

42. *- e mich, lass dich höchst vergnügt um -*

A minor D7 G major (A7) D major A major B7

44. *fan - - - - - gen, höchst vergnügt um - fan - -*

E minor E7 A minor (deceptive cadence) D# dim.7 B7 E minor

46. *gen!*

Ritornello

E minor D7 G major (A7) D major G# dim.7 A minor (B7)

48. *- - - - -*

A# dim.7 B major E minor E7 A minor F major A minor D# dim.7 E minor B7 E major (deceptive cadence)

Despite the fact that Jesus is still a child in the biblical account, the bass answers as the Vox Christi, singing Jesus' words from the day's Gospel reading (biblical dictum), but changed to second person singular (instead of plural).

Secco **Recitativo.**
32/2. **Basso.**

•Vox Christi: Why did you seek me? I am found in my Father's house
Luke 2:49 (32/2).

Although Jesus is only 12 years old in the Gospel reading, it was liturgical tradition to give the vox Christi to the bass voice. Bach provides emphasis to the question by repeating the first 2 words with an upward-inflected leap, almost as if the singer is scolding.

1.

Karin Wollschläger (with translation by David Kosviner) writes, "The Gospel reading (Luke 2:41-52) reports of Mary and Joseph's search for their twelve-year-old son whom they then find in the temple in Jerusalem. The libretto... takes up the themes of longing, searching and reconciliation in the form of a dialogue between the "Soul" and "Jesus"—an allegory of the devout Christian and the incarnate divine Trinity. Therefore Bach, in the old Vox Christi tradition, logically allocates Jesus to the bass and not, as the Gospel reading about the twelve-year-old Jesus suggests, to the soprano (at Bach's time, this would have been sung by a boy soprano). Musically logical reasons would also have caused Bach to do this as the Soul is customarily represented by a soprano, and a double allocation of this register would not only complicate the distinction between the Soul and Jesus but would also limit the musical diversity." See *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Sacred Vocal Music Complete Edition. Cantatas and Motets* (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 2017), vol. 3, p. 264.

3. Choosing the low octave adds emphasis (compare low held note on "Stätte" in m. 53 of the following aria. Phrygian cadence for question

3.

The solo violin plays a theme derived from the opening vocal motto. Periodic phrases and minuet rhythms give Jesus' words the manner of a courtier wooing the soul.



Minuet-like.

In the bass aria that follows, the singer (in the voice of Christ) elaborates on his previous statement: a downcast soul can find Jesus in his Father's house. Bach provides a lengthy da capo minuet, in which the singer is accompanied by a solo violin playing an intricate, embellishing obbligato, characterized by triplets. The triple meter, triplets, and trio texture suggest the Trinity.

1.



For expressive purpose, Bach chooses not the relative major of B minor but a 6th above. See side note.)

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

7.

12. Unexpected phrase division concludes the ritornello.

12.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

Basso.

17.

Hier, in meines — Va — ters Stät — te,

G major

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

The solo violin and (for a bit), the continuo imitate the Vox Christi; the voice/violin duet perhaps suggesting the meeting of the soul with Jesus. The 3-fold imitation perhaps suggests the involvement of all three members of the Trinity in the "unio mystica."

23.

hier, in meines — Va — ters Stät — te,

G major

The 3-fold repetition (in triple meter) of a swaying, 2-measure unit suggests the comfort of a cradle song (more below).

29.

find't mich ein — be — trüb — — ter Geist, hier, — in

Word painting: Harmonic clashes, minor mode, and descending chromatic scale for "downcast."

Triple stops for Vln.

(E7) A minor D7 G major A7 D major

The voice of Christ says the down-cast soul will find him in his Father's house and thereby find comfort.

The 3-fold structural repetition and triplets may symbolize the Trinity, expanding Jesus' statement about his identity to include Father, Son, and the Spirit, whom Jesus called the "Comforter," whom he would send after his death to dwell within the believer (John 14). The "filioque clause" in the Nicene Creed, which resulted from the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western Church in 1054, specifies that the Spirit "proceeds from Father and Son." Thus, the ascending and descending scales in the violin (often triplets) may represent the comforting, energizing activity of the Holy Spirit. Significantly, the voice never has the triplets.

34.

mei — nes Va — — ters Stät — — te, find't mich ein be — trüb —

Minor mode for "downcast"

E minor A7 D major E minor D major D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

39. - ter Geist. Ritornello D major D major D major

45. Hier, D major D major

50. hier, in mei-nes Va-ters Stät-te, Held low note on "abode" is reminiscent of the low note of "in dem" of the previous movement, perhaps suggesting God dwelling on earth. Triple stop D7 G major G major

57. hier, in meines Va-ters Stätte, find't mich ein-be- Triple stops G major E7 A minor D7 D7

63. trüb-ter Geist, hier, in mei-nes Va-ters Triple stops Minor mode and chromatic inflection for "downcast spirit" G minor C# dim.7 D7 G major

The 3-fold repetition (in triple meter) of a swaying, 2-measure unit with triplets may symbolize the Trinity, expanding Jesus' statement about his identity to include the comforting, energizing Spirit (see more above).

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

68. Stät-te, find't mich ein be-trüb-ter Geist, deceptive cadence

73. ein be-trüb-ter Geist, ein be-trüb-ter Geist, find't mich hier, 5-bar phrase

79. in mei-nes Va-ters Stät-te, hier, in mei-nes Va-ters

85. Stät-te, find't mich ein be-trüb-ter Geist. Ritornello

91.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

97.

D7 G major D7

101. Unexpected phrase division with deceptive cadence concludes the ritornello.

Deceptive cadence G major G major G major

Most immediately, the text alludes to the Gospel lesson, in which Jesus' parents find their 12-year-old son in the temple after searching for him for three days.

The minuet rhythm changes in the B Section. For Grove Dictionary's description of common minuet dance patterns, see side note.

106.

Da kannst du mich si - cher fin - den — und — dein

B7 E minor E7 A minor D major D7

The sentiment points to the "unio mystica" of Jesus with the believing soul, for the believer's heart is his abode. The biblical source appears to be John 14. See side note for more.

111.

Herz mit mir — ver - bin - den, — weil dies mei - ne

The pronoun "dies" refers to "Herz" (heart).

G major G major F# major F#7 B minor

116.

Woh - nung heisst.

Ritornello L.H.

B minor B minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

121. *tr*

(F#7) B minor Hemiola B minor

125. Da kannst du mich si cher fin den und

Stream of accents on beat 3 (syncopations) for "verbinden" (bind together, i.e., in mystic union)

(D7) G major G major

130. dein Herz mit mir ver bin den, weil dies mei ne

Mystic Union

E7 A minor D7 G major G7 C major C7

135. Woh nung, dies mei ne Woh nung heisst, da kannst du mich

D minor G7 C major C major

4-fold repetition with accents on downbeats.

140. si cher fin den und dein Herz mit mir ver

C major A7 D minor D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

145.

bin - den, weil dies, dies mei - ne Woh-nung heisst.

D minor G7 C major C major

Recitativo.

32/4.

Soprano.

A-B-A structure in which the A sections is characterized by sustained string chords, while the B section has repeated 8th-note chords.

Note: At this point, the two voices sing in alternation; union is not achieved until the following aria.

„Ach, hei-liger und grosser Gott! so will ich mir denn hier, bei dir, be-

Ah, holy and great God, thus will I - then here with thee

p Strings

B minor A# dim.7 B minor D major

In an accompanied dialogue (set as recitative) the Soul and Jesus meet—as Jesus and his parents did, in the House of God. In the middle section of the lengthy exchange (structured symmetrically), we hear the words from Psalm 84, familiar to many listeners from Brahms's Requiem.

• Dialogue (Christ and Soul); they meet in God's house (32/4).

Da Capo.

Until this point, the dialogue has occurred between movements. Now the Soul and Jesus interact within the same movement.

4.

Basso.

ständig Trost und Hil-fe suchen: „Wirst du den Erdentand ver-fluchen und nur in

continually comfort and help seek. Wilt thou - earth's-bauble/vanity curse and just into

The theme of comfort (and by implication the Spirit as Comforter) reappears.

The Vox Christe admonishes the soul to reject the world, a possible allusion to 1 John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him." Or James 4:4 (see left).

E major A major B7

The Vox Christe admonishes the soul to reject the world, a possible allusion to 1 John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him." Or James 4:4 (see left).

"Verfluchen" (to curse) is set with wrenching harmonic progression.

(♩ = 52.)

Soprano sings the opening of Psalm 84, almost verbatim, as an arioso, ending with a declaration of love for Jesus.

Soprano.

B Section

„Wie lieb-lich

How lovely

The pulsing 8th-note chords by the strings suggest the sombre attitude of Passion music.

9.

ist doch dei-ne Wohnung. Herr, starker Ze.ba.oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

is indeed thy dwelling, Lord, mighty Sabaoth; my spirit longs for that, which only in

C#7 F# minor F# minor F#7

B7

E major

Harmonic progression of one step higher reflects the word "verlangt" (longs).

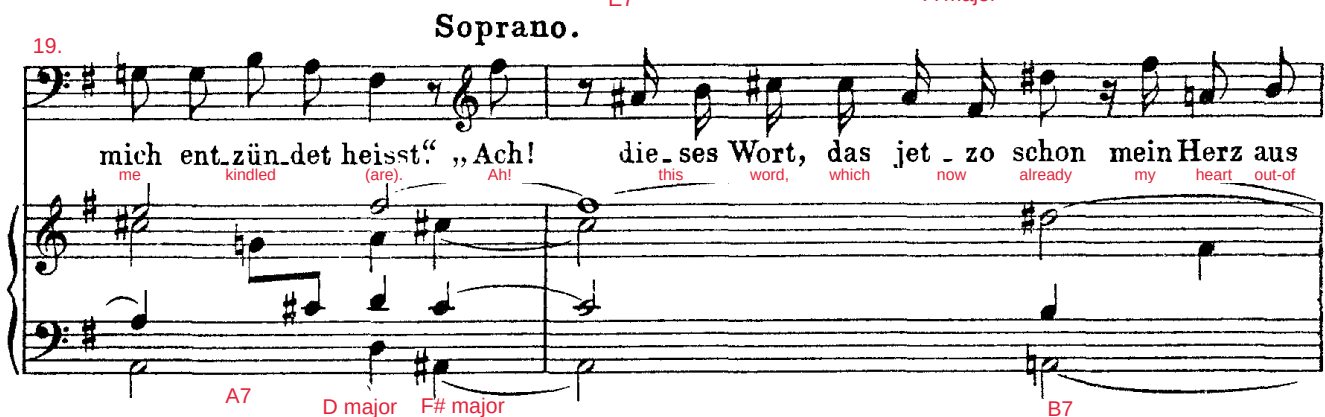
J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

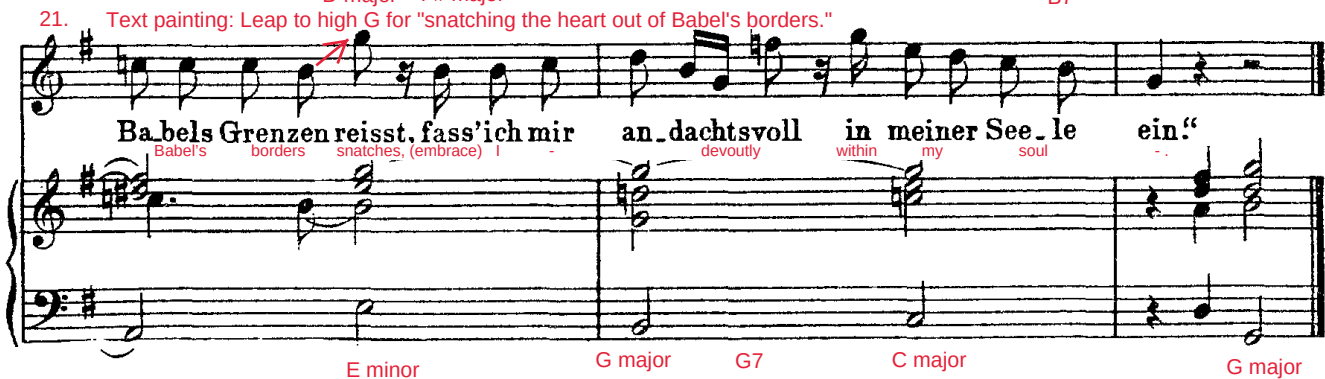
Text painting: Melismas of fast notes for "rejoices" and "living" (with skip upward for "rejoices".)

12. 
 dei-nem Ho-fe prangt; mein Leib und See-le freu-etsich in dem lœ-
 thy court is-resplendently-displayed. My body and soul le rejoice in the
 B minor A major

14. 
 bend' - gen Gott. Ach, Je-su! mei-ne Brust liebt dich nun e-wiglich.
 living God: Ah! Jesus, my breast loves thee alone eternally.
 B7 E7 A# dim.7 B minor

17. **Basso.** 
 "A" Section „So kannst du glück-lich sein, wenn Herz und Geist aus Lie-be ge-gen
 Thus canst thou happy be, when (thy) heart and spirit out-of love toward
 B minor E7 A major

19. **Soprano.** 
 mich ent-zün-det heisst: „Ach! die-ses Wort, das jet-zo schon mein Herz aus
 me kindled (are). Ah! this word, which now already my heart out-of
 A7 D major F# major B7

21. 
 Babels Grenzen reisst, fass'ich mir an-dachtsvoll in meiner See-le ein.
 Babel's borders snatches, (embrace) I devoutly within my soul
 E minor G major G7 C major G major

In a dancing (gavotte-like) tempo, the two lovers sing of their happiness (the two now joined), while the two obbligato instruments heard separately earlier join together in accompaniment (perhaps a reflection of the symbiotic union of Christ and the believer). The text recalls that of 154/7 (for the same Sunday 2 years before, which Bach set with unbridled joy). Here in Cantata 32, Bach colors a rustic, folk-like tune with chromatic chords, especially on the downbeat appoggiaturas.

Duetto.

32/5 Vivace. (♩ = 12.) • Dialogue (Christ and believing Soul): Mystical union (32/5).

The oboe melody is derived from the singer's line. It is characterized by leaps of a 6th, inflected/chromatic notes and is a simplified version of the concertante Vln I part (which plays biplanar 16ths and rising scalar 32nds). The rhythm is that of the gavotte, whose metrical structure is stressed with trills in the oboe and staccato figures in the lower strings and continuo.

Like the opening aria text, this text has a chiasmic rhyme scheme (ABC-CBA). However, Bach sets it as a da capo aria, in which the A section (consisting of the first two lines of text) is given more than 3/4 of the allotted music. Furthermore, the contrasting middle section ends with a "forestatement" of the opening words. See side note for more.

Petzoldt notes that the A section paraphrases Isaiah 35:10, which binds Old and New Testament eschatology: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Bach-Kommentar 2:431).

Soprano.

figura corta

Text Lines 1 & 2.
Rhyme: A-B

Nun verschwinden al le Pla -

Figura corta

Basso

The Vox Christi and Soul sing the same text in imitation, taking the lead in alternation.

"...besteht aus drey geschwinden Noten, deren eine allein so lang ist, als die übrigen beyde"
Johann Gottfried Walther "Musicalisches Lexicon..." [Leipzig, 1732]

("...consists of 3 fast notes, of which one has the same value as the other two taken together.")

Nun verschwinden al le Pla -

Oboe imitates voices.

14.

Cross relations created by inflected/chromatic notes depict the "woes" that are now gone.

nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und Schmerz, Ach und Schmerz

- gen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und Schmerz

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

17.

Karin Wollschläger (with translation by David Kosviner) writes, the soprano and bass constantly imitate each other and then complete the lines together. Furthermore, in this concertante movement, Bach unites the oboe and the violin which had previously appeared separately to accompany the Soul (oboe, no.1) and Jesus (violin, no. 3)." See *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Sacred Vocal Music Complete Edition. Cantatas and Motets* (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 2017), vol. 3, p. 264.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

D major A major E7 A major

19.

Nun verschwinden alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz

E7 A major A minor

22.

Now Vox Christi leads, echoed by the Soul.

Nun verschwinden alle Plagen, alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz

A major B7 E minor F#7 B minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

25.

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al. le Plagen, al. le Pla - - gen, nun verschwindet Ach und

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al. le Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und

B minor E7 A major B major B7 E minor

28.

Schmerz, nun ver - schwinden al - le Plagen, nun ver - schwin - det Ach und

Schmerz, nun ver - schwinden al - le Pla - gen, nun ver - schwin - det Ach und

Word painting: Sequential, rising flights of 32nd notes in Vln I depicts "verschwinden alle Plagen" (the vanishing of all plaguing troubles).

A7 (D major) D7 (G major) D major G# dim.7

Harmonic ambiguity for "Plagen"

30.

Schmerz, nun verschwinden alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach _____ und

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al - le Pla - - - -

A major D major A7 D major D7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

33.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und
- gen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und

G major G minor D minor G# dim.7 D minor

36.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!
Schmerz, nun verschwin - - det Ach und Schmerz!

Ritornello
Ob

D major D major G# dim.7

39.

E7 A minor (B7) E major A major A major B major

42.

E minor D major E major

44.

A7 D7 G major A7 D major

Text Lines
3,4,5,6 (1,2)
Rhyme:
CCBA (AB)

47.

Nun will ich nicht von dir las_sen, nun will ich und ich dich auch stets um_fassen, und ich dich auch stets um_

Ob

Strings

Continuo alone

Tension created with deceptive cadences.

50.

_nicht von dir las_sen, nun will ich nicht von dir lassen, nun will fassen, und ich dich auch stets um_fassen, und ich dich auch stets um_fas_

D major F#7 Deceptive cadences (B minor avoided) B7 Deceptive cadence B7 E minor D major

53.

ich nicht von dir las_sen. sen. Ritornello (Instruments enter)

F#7 B minor F#7 B minor A7 D major B minor

55.

Ob

D major F#7 B minor B7 E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

57.

Nun ver.gnü.get sich mein Herz,
und kann voller Freude

p Continuo alone

F# major F#7 B minor B minor E major A minor D major

60.

Text and theme of the A section reappears before the A section proper returns.

nun ver.gnü.get sich mein Herz, nun verschwinden al. le
sagen, und kann voller Freude sagen:

Continuo takes up 16ths to prepare for da capo.

G# dim.7 C# major F# minor E7 A major A major D major

63.

Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!
nun verschwinden al. le Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

Ritornello (instruments enter)

D major Dal Segno.

The cantata ends with a simple four-part setting of the 12th and final stanza of the 1647 chorale "Weg, mein Herz, mit den Gedanken" by Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676), added to the libretto by someone—perhaps Bach), representing the corporate response of the congregation. Martin Petzoldt argues that adding a

32/6. **Choral.** (Mel.: „Freu' dich sehr, o meine Seele.“) •Prayer: Open to me the portals of thy sweet blessing (32/6).

Soprano. 1/5. Tune: Freu' dich sehr, O meine Seele

Ob, Vln I

Alto. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit,
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit!

Vln II

Tenore. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit,
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit!

Vla

Basso. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit,
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit!

Continuo, organo

G major D major E minor G major

9. Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,

13. G major G major G major D major

wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.

G major C major G major G major