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NBA I/26; BC A155

22. S. after Trinity (BWV 89, 115, 55)

*Philippians 1:3–11 (Paul's prayer for the church at Philippi)

*Matthew 18:23–35 (The parable of the unforgiving servant)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 24 October 1723 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas). This cantata is part of Bach's first cantata cycle in Leipzig (see note).

The cantata explores themes in Jesus' parable in the Gospel reading: the immensity of human guilt, humanity's ironically common unforgiving spirit, and God's grace.

With BWV 89, Bach began a string of 4 cantatas that employ SATB chorus only in the closing chorale (BWV 89, 163, 60, 90).

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 89

Was soll ich aus dir machen, Ephraim

Instrumentation:

Corno da caccia (ad lib.)

Ob I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo



Aria. Quasi-arioso

89/1. (**Larghetto** ♩ = 50.)

•Voice of God: Israel deserves no mercy: Hosea 11:8 (89/1).

Ob I & II play sighing figures in parallel 3rds.

The oscillating ostinato bass figure may be interpreted as God's apparent indecision (see m. 36; also BWV 55/1 and 105/3 (vacillation) and 150/6 (wavering determination). Alternatively, it may suggest God's rumbling anger.

For biblical background, see note.



Basso. (Vox Dei)

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.



soll ich aus dir machen, was soll ich aus dir machen, E - phraim?

Concerning the names Ephraim, Admah, and Zeboiim, see note.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

12

Was soll ich aus dir machen, was

C minor C minor

14^{II}

soll ich aus dir machen, E - phraim? Soll ich dich schüt -

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

Rhetorical Question 1.

Hn

Vokaleinbau (Vokal insertioni)

B dim.7 C minor E-flat major

17

Word painting: Sustained note, then long melisma for schützen' ("protect").

zen, soll ich dich schüt -

E-flat major

19^{II}

E-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

Rhetorical Question 2.

22

-zen, I - sra-el? Soll ich nicht billigein A -

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

Ob I & II

Hn

Str

Ob I & II

E-flat major F minor F minor E dim.7

24^{II}

-dama aus dir ma-chen und dich wie Ze - bo -

F minor

27

-im zu - rich - ten?

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

Hn

F minor

30

A - ber mein Herz ist anders Sin - nes, mein Herz ist anders

But my heart is of different mind.

Vln I & II

Ob I & II

Vokaleinbau (Vocal insertion)

Tritone interval between singer and bass signals reversal.

F# dim.7 G minor G minor

The idea that God is of a different mind, offering love instead of harsh judgment, is portrayed with a harmonic progression that travels in a different direction.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

Text painting: Wandering melisma for "different mind."

33

Sin - nes, mein Herz ist an - ders Sinnes, mein Herz ist an - - -

Oscillating figure for "anders Sinnes" ("different mind").

G minor G minor

35 II

- - - - - ders Sin - - - - - nes, mein

Str

G minor G minor

38

Herz ist an - ders Sin - - - - - nes, an - ders Sin - - nes, mein Herz -

G minor G minor

40

- ist an - ders Sinnes, mein Herz - - - ist - anders Sinnes, mei - ne Barm -

Ob I & II Str Ob I & II Str

Vokaleinbau (vocal insertion)

B-flat 7 E-flat major G7 C minor C minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

43

her - zigkeit ist zu brün - stig, mei - ne Barmher - zigkeit ist zu

C minor

Word painting: Long, flickering coloratura for "brünstig" ("ardent").

46

brün -

48 II

- stig, zu brünstig, zu brün -

C7

F minor

51

- stig, meine Barmherzigkeit ist zu brünstig, zu brün - stig.

D7 G7 C minor

Hn up 8va

C minor

Strings +Ob I & II

Dal Segno.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

Secco

89/2. **Recitativo.** • Judgment well-deserved; man himself shows no mercy (89/2).

1. **Alto.**

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 9 mm.

For biblical background, see note.



Alto is often the voice of faith.

Ja, freilich soll-te Gott ein Wort zum Ur-theilsprechen und seines

Yes, to-be-sure, should God a word (of) judgment speak and his

D major G minor

Namens Spott an seinen Feinden rächen. Un-zählbar ist die Rechnung deiner

name's derision upon his foes avenge. Countless is the sum of-your

B-flat (7) E dim.7 F major B-flat major

Sün-den, und hät-te Gott auch gleich Ge-duld, ver-wirft doch dein feind-

sins, and had God even though patience (with you), rejects nevertheless your hostile

B dim.7 G7 C minor A dim.

se-li-ge Ge-mü-the die an-ge-bot'ne Gü-te und drückt den Nächsten um die

spirit (his) proffered kindness and presses (your) neighbor for (repayment of) the

The references to "God's proffered kindness" and "pressing your neighbor over his debt" refer directly to the Gospel reading (see note).

D7 G minor B-flat major G# dim.7 E7 [implied Am]

Schuld; so muss die Ra-che sich ent-zün-den.

debt; so must (his) vengeance be-kindled.

Harsh chromaticism for "vengeance must be kindled."

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

The text paraphrases James 2:13: "Judgment like that of Sodom falls on the unmerciful (89/3). no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment" but also alludes to the Gospel reading.

Aria. •Judgment like that of Sodom falls on the unmerciful (89/3).

89/3. 1. (Risoluto $\text{♩} = 72$.)

Ritornello (quasi ostinato bass) derived from vocal theme.

Continuo alone throughout...

Compare subject in Fugue in G minor in Well-Tempered Clavier I.

[D minor]

Quasi-ostinato bass employed segmentally. D minor

F7

For biblical background, see note.



3 Alto.

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.

Ein unbarm..

B-flat major

F# dim.7

G7

A7

D minor

D minor

5 u

her - zi - ges Ge - rich - te,

D minor

F7

B-flat major

F# dim.7

Overlapping entries of the headmotive reflect the inflexibility of the unforgiving disposition and the inevitability of judgment referenced in the text.

8

ein un - barm - her - zi - ges Ge -

Head motive in diminution (up 8va)—see full score.

G7

A7

D minor

D minor

Text painting: Wave-like melodic arches "will fall upon you."

10

rich - te wird ü - ber dich ge - wiss er - gehn, ein unbarm - her - zi - ges Ge -

D minor

F major

B-flat major

F# dim.7

D7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

12

rich - te, — ein un - - - barm - her - zi - ges Ge - rich - te wird ü - ber

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

14

dich ge - wiss er - geh'n, — — — — — ein un - barm - her - zi -

C7 F major C# dim.7

16

ges Ge - rich - te wird ü - ber dich gewiss er - geh'n!

D7 E7 A minor A minor F major E7

18

Die Ra - - - - - che fängt bei de - nen an,

Dramatic coloratura for "Rache" ("vengeance").

A minor C major

Descending (flat-ward) tonal sequence associated with downfall of Sodom: Am/CM-FM-Gm-Cm-A M.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

20

die Ra - - - - -

A longer melisma featuring 3 against 2 increases the tension.

C major

C major

22

- - che fängt bei denen an, die nicht Barmher - - zig-keit ge -

C7

F major

F7

24

than, die nicht Barmher - zig-keit, Barm - her - zig-keit ge - than

D7

G minor

G minor

26

und ma - chet sie wie So - - - - -

C7

D7

G minor

G minor

B-flat 7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

28

- - - - - dom ganz zu_nich_te, und

E-flat major G7 C minor C minor E-flat 7

30

ma_chet sie_wie So_dom, wie So_dom ganz zu_nich_te.

A-flat major C7 F7 B dim.7 C minor

32

Greatly modified da capo (modulating back to D minor from C minor).

Ein un_barm_her_zi_ges Ge_rich_te wird ü_ber_dich ge_wiss_er_

C minor D7 G minor F major

34

gehn, ein un_barm_her_zi_ges Ge_

B-flat major F# dim.7 (A7) D minor

36

rich-te wird ü-ber dich ge-wiss er-gehn, ein un-barm-her-zi-ges Ge-

D minor D minor F# dim.7 G minor

38

rich-te wird ü-ber dich gewiss er-gehn!

Ritornello

G minor A7 D minor D minor D minor

40^{II}

Secco

F7 B-flat major F# dim.7 G7 A7 D minor D minor

89/4. **Recitativo.** •Sins' debt forgiven in Jesus who is the end of the law (89/4).

1. Soprano

Wohlan! mein Herze legt Zorn, Zank und Zwietracht hin; es ist bereit, dem

Well-then! My heart lays wrath, quarreling, and dissension away; it is prepared, (its)

Secco

F major F# dim.7 G minor

4

Nächsten zu ver-ge-ben. Al-lein, wie schreckt mich mein sünden-volles

neighbor to forgive. Yet, how alarms me my sinful

N6 B-flat 7 E-flat major E dim.7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

7

Le - ben, dass ich vor Gott in Schul - den bin! Doch Je - su

life, that/because I before God in debts am! Yet Jesus'

F minor B dim.7 C minor

9

Blut macht die-se Rechnung gut, wenn ich zu ihm, als des Ge-setzes En-de, mich

blood makes this account good, if I to him, as the law's (appointed) end, myself

The reference to "Jesus as the end of the law" comes from Romans 10 (see note).

F# dim.7 D7 G minor B-flat major E-flat major

Adagio. (♩ = 50.)

Arioso E (tr)

Word painting: Change to arioso with long melisma for "gläubig wende" ("turn [to Jesus] in faith").

11

gläu - big wen - de.

in-faith do-turn.

C7 B-flat major D7 G minor B-flat major E dim.7 F7 B-flat major

Aria.

89/5. (Allegretto ♩ = 50.) • Sin's account paid by Jesus' drops of blood (89/5).

Ritornello (an ornamented version of the vocal line).

Oboe I 1. mf Ritornello

B-flat major B-flat major

Form (Rhyme: ABBACC)
Ritornello (mm. 1-8) B M
Lines 1-3 (9-23) B M-FM
Rit (24-27) FM
Line 4 (28-31) D7-Cm
Rit (32-33) Cm
Lines 5-6 (34-39) Cm-Gm
Rit (40-43) Gm
Lines 4-6 (44-51) F7-B M
Rit (1-8) B M

4

B-flat 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.

8 **Soprano.** Lines 1-3.

Ge - rech - ter Gott, ach, rech - nest du?

A dance-like theme with syllabically declaimed text suggests the image of "counting" referenced in the text and child-like confidence of reconciliation with God.

For biblical background, see note.

B-flat major B-flat major

p *mf*

12

ge - rech - ter Gott, ach, rech - nest du, so wer - de ich - zum

B-flat major B-flat major

16

Heil der See - len die Trop - fen Blut von Je - su zäh - len, so

B-flat major F7 C7

20

wer - de ich zum Heil - der Seelen die Trop - fen Blut von Je - su zäh - len.

hemiola

F major F major

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24 Line 4.

Ach!

Ritornello

F major F major

28

rech - ne mir die Sum - me zu, ach, rech - ne mir die Summe zu!

D7 C minor C minor

32 Lines 5-6. Descending lines for "no one can fathom."

Ja, weil sie Nie - mand kann - er - gründen, be -

Ritornello

C minor C minor B-flat (7) E-flat major

36

deckt sie mei - ne Schuld und Sün - den, be - deckt sie mei - ne Schuld -

hemiola

F# dim.7 G minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89

39

—und Sün - den.

Ritornello

G minor G minor G7 G7 C major

42

Before repeating lines 5 & 6, Bach goes back to line 4: "Ah, put to my account that sum [of droplets of Jesus' blood]." In this way, he emphasizes the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Lines 4–6.

Ach! rech - ne mir die
Ah, put-to-my account that

D7 G minor (F7)

45

Sum - me zu, ach, rech - ne mir die Sum - me zu! Ja,

sum

B-flat major F pedal... B-flat major

48

weil sie Nie - mand kann er - gründen, be - deckt sie mei - ne Schuld und Sün - den.

hemiola

B-flat 7 B dim. 7 C minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

Dal Segno.

89/6. **Choral.** (Mel.: „Auf meinen lieben Gott.“) • Shortcomings acknowledged; adequacy in Christ's blood (89/6).

The chorale's harmonization is simple, without chromatic tension, suggesting a child-like faith.

For biblical background, see note.



Soprano. 1.
+Ob I, II
+Vin I

Alto.
+Vin II

Tenore.
+Vla

Basso.

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

G minor D major D7 G minor D major

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

G minor B-flat major B-flat major G minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

D major G minor C7 F major F7 D7 G minor G major

4 of the 5 enemies of Christ are mentioned (see note).

