

NBA I/7; BC A45

Sexagesima (BWV 18, 181, 126)

*2 Corinthians 11:19–12:9 (God's power is made perfect in weakness)

*Luke 8:4–15 (Parable of the sower)

Librettist: Unknown. Movement 5, perhaps other movements, too, based on an earlier work.

FP: 13 February 1724 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas, together with BWV 18: see note).

J.S. Bach
Cantata No. 181

Leichtgesinnte Flattergeister

Instrumentation:

Tromba in D

Flauto traverso (added later, doubling Vln I)

Oboe (added later, doubling Vln I)

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo, Organo

1. Aria

Vivace

181/1.

Tutti

Ritornello derived from vocal theme.

Form (Rhyme: ABCBB)

Ritornello (mm. 1-8) Em

A. Lines 1-2 (3x: 9-23) Em-GM

Rit (23-27) GM

B. Lines 3-5 (2x: 28-38) GM-Bm

Rit (38-41) Bm-Em

A'. Lines 1-2 (2x: 42-51) Em

Rit (52) Em

B'. Lines 3-5 (2x: 53-63) Am-Em

Rit (1-8) Em

Bourée-like

Chromatic, wandering harmonies...

E minor

D major

C major

E minor

D# dim.7

B7

E minor

B major

4 (67)

B7

D# dim.7

B7

C major G major E minor

Bass is often the voice of authority.

The term "Flattergeister" alludes to Psalm 119:113: I hate double-minded men (Luther 1545: Flattergeister) but I love thy law. The term literally means "fluttering spirits." Using poetic license, these people are identified with the birds/devil in Jesus' parable (see note).

Basso

A. Lines 1-2.

Patter diction approaching the style of comic opera (see note for Martin Petzoldt's interpretation).

Leichtgesinn'te Flatter-geister,

leichtge-

Text painting: Fluttering melody depicts the "superficially-minded fickle spirits."

For biblical background, see note.

E minor B7 C major

E minor

E minor

E minor

D major

E7 A minor

10

sinnte Flattergeister

rauben sich des Wor-tes Kraft,

des Wortes

Word painting: Sustained note followed by melisma for "power [of the Word]."

Str

+Fl, Ob

B7

E minor

C major

A minor

E minor

B7

E minor

13

Kraft. leichtge.

tr *Str* *p*

D# dim.7 B7 B7 E minor E minor

16

sinnte Flattergeister, leichtge-sinnte Flattergeister rauben sich des Wor-tes Kraft,

Ob interjects *Fl interjects*

E7 A minor (B7) E minor E minor E minor

19

leichtgesinnte Flat-tergeister rauben

Word painting: Fluttering melisma for "fluttering spirits" and flitting instrumental figures.

G# dim.7 E7 A minor C# dim.7 A7 F# dim.7 D7

22

sich des Wortes Kraft. rau - ben sich des Wor-tes Kraft.

tr *Ritornello* *Tutti* *Vln I* *f*

G major G major G7 C major

The text alludes to Jesus' parable: "The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12). Belial is identified as the devil in 2 Corinthians 6:15: What accord has Christ with Belial?

25

Be - li -

A7 D major D7 G major

p

28

B. Lines 3-5.

al, Be - li - al, Be - li - al mit seinen Kindern suchet

Word painting: "Belial" depicted with foreboding repetition in the vocal part, descending cascades in the continuo arriving on diminished 7th chords. Fluttering figures pervade...

G# dim.7 E7 A minor A# dim.7 F# major D# dim.7 B7 E minor

Ob interjects Ob interjects

31

oh - ne - dem zu hin - dern, daß es kei - nen Nut - zen schafft, ——— keinen Nutzen

C#7 F# major B minor

Ob/Vln

33II

schafft, kei - - nen Nut - - - zen schafft, Be - li - al mit seinen Kindern suchet

B minor A# dim.7 F#7

Flitting interjections

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

36

oh-nedem zu hindern, daß es kei - nen — Nutzen, kei - nen Nutzen schafft. Ritornello

+Fl Tutti

F#7 B minor B minor

39

A'. Lines 1-2. Leichtge-

B7 E minor E minor

42

sinnte Flat-ter-geister, leichtge - sinnte Flat-ter-geister rauben sich des Wor-tes

= m. 9. = m. 10. = m. 11.

Flitting interjections

E minor D major A minor B7 E minor

44 II

Kraft, — des Wor-tes Kraft,

Str +Fl, Ob = m. 12. = m. 13.

B7 D# dim.7 B7 D# dim.7 B7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

47

= m. 14, = m. 15. leicht ge - sinnte Flattergeister, leicht ge - = m. 16.

tr *p* Flitting interjections

(B7) E minor E minor E7 A minor A minor

50

sinnte Flattergeister = m. 17. rauben sich des Wortes Kraft.

f Ritornello

(B7) E minor E minor E minor E minor

52 II B'. Lines 3-5.

Be - li - al, Be - li - al, Be - li -

= m. 28 transposed. [29]

p Flitting interjections

G# dim.7 A minor A minor A minor

55

al mit seinen Kin - dern sucht oh - ne - dem zu hin - dern, daß es

[30] FI/Vln I [31]

A minor D# dim.7 E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

57

kei - nen Nut - zen schafft, keinen Nutzen schafft, kei -

[32] *tr* [33] *tr*

E minor E minor

59

- nen Nut - zenschaft, Beli - al mit seinen Kindern suchet ohne - dem zu

[34] [35] [36]

Flitting interjections

E minor D# dim.7 B7

61 II

hindern, daß es kei - nen Nutzen, kei - nen Nutzen schafft.

[37] [38]

E minor dal segno E minor

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part of the recitative sections in 13 mm.

For biblical background, see note.

2. Recitativo • Word that falls on hard hearts is ineffective (181/2).

181/2. Alto C D# E F# A G# E# B C#

Alto is often the voice of faith. O unglückselger Stand verkehr-ter Seelen, so gleichsam an dem We-ge

O unhappy state of-wayward (perverted) souls, who as-it-were on the path

Be. Secco

D# dim.7 C#7

Text painting: "perverted" chord progressions...

3 II

sind, und wer will doch des Satans List er - zählen, wenn er das Wort dem Herzen

are, and who could indeed - Satan's cunning tell, when he the Word out-of-the heart

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

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

6

D **B-flat**

raubt, das, am Ver-stan-de blind, den Scha-den nicht ver - steht noch glaubt.
steals, which, in discernment blind, the harm not discerns nor believes?

E7 G# dim.7 C# dim.7 G# dim.7 A minor

Arioso

Compare the sequence in "Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis" (BWV 21). Here the progression turns perverse (m. 11).

Andante

Text painting: Inflexibly repeated notes depict knocking on the unyielding hearts as hard as stone (cf. Revelation 3:20).

9

Es werden Felsen - herzen, so boshaft wider - stehn, ihr
(Now) will hearts-of-stone, which wickedly resist (God's call), their

A minor A minor A minor F#7 B minor B major

12

eigen Heil ver - scherzen, ihr eigen Heil ver - scher - zen und einst zu - grunde
own salvation frivolously-forfeit their own salvation frivolously-forfeit and one-day be ruined.

E minor E minor A# dim.7 B minor

Word painting: "laughing" melisma for "verscherzen" ("joke about" or "frivolously forfeit.")

Original printed libretto had "zu Trümmern gehen" ("go to ruins"). Bach saves this reference for the Andante.

15 (Recit.) **Andante**

geh'n. Es wirkt ja Chri - sti letz - tes Wort, daß
(Now) works indeed Christ's final word, that
[Jesus' last words: "It is finished."]

B major D# dim.7

Right hand is editorial addition.

Text painting: The reference to the breaking of boulders (as in the apocalyptic earthquake after Jesus' death) is depicted with a jagged bass (see note above).

The account of an earthquake following Jesus' last words is found in the Gospel of Matthew. It is noteworthy that at about this time (Lent 1724) Bach was presumably working on the St. John Passion, in which he interpolated this Matthew account of the earthquake (BWV 245/33).

17

Fel - sen selbst zer - sprin - gen; des

rocks themselves split-in-pieces; the

D# dim.7 B major G#7

18

En - gels Hand be - wegt des Gra - bes Stein, ja, Mo - sis Stab kann

angels' hand moves the grave's stone, yes, Moses' rod can

R.H. is editorial.

Matthew records an earthquake at the resurrection, so Bach continues the continuo's jagged figure, descending downwards sequentially at the text's reference to the resurrection. Regarding the significance of the sharps, see note.

G#7 D# dim.7 =C (lowest cello note) G#7 C#7

20

dort aus ei-nem Ber-ge Was-ser bringen. Willst du, o Herz, noch här-ter sein?

there out-of a mountain water bring. Wouldst thou, O heart, still harder be (than these)?

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

Text painting: Descending cascade of notes for water.

Bach restructured the libretto so that this movement became the center in the symmetrical form (see note at no. 1).

3. Aria

• Word sown among worldly thorns, which will burn (181/3).

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions.

Alfred Dürr notes that this aria "survives in an incomplete state: in all probability, as demonstrated in the Bach-Jahrbuch for 1960 (pp. 32-6), it lacks a solo violin part." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 237. For more, see note.

181/3. 1.

Right hand is editorial. The presumed obbligato part would likely have been very ornate, to depict the "thorns" referenced in the text.

Ritornello *piano e staccato per tutto*

B minor A major D major

9

F# major B minor

This 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.

16

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

22

E7 A minor N6 F#7

28

F#7 B minor

34 **Tenore** The text references the thorns that choke out the Word in Jesus' parable.

8

Der schäd - li - chen Dor - nen un - end - li - che Zahl,
The harmful thorns' infinite number,

For biblical background, B minor see note.

B minor B minor B minor

40

8

der schäd - li - chen Dornen un - end - li - che Zahl,

B minor B minor B minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

Descending scalar melisma contrasts with inverted scalar motive in mm. 117–122.

46

die Sor-gen der Wollust, die Schät-ze zu meh-
The cares of pleasure, (one's) treasures to multiply,

G major A7 D major F#7

52

- ren, die wer-den das Feu-
These will the fire

B minor B minor E(7)

58

- er der höl-li-schen
of hell's

A major F#7 B minor C#7 F# minor

64

Qual in E-wig-keit näh-
torment in eternity feed.

F# minor F# minor F# minor B minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

71

8

Text painting: Flickering melismas for "feeding hell's flames."

- ren, das Feu -

(E major) A aug. D major C(#7) F# minor F# major

77

8

- er der höl - li - schen Qual

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

83

8

in E - wig - keit näh - ren.

hemiola

F# minor F# minor

89

8

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

96

8

Der schäd - li - chen Dornen un - end - li - che Zahl, die

F# minor B7 E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

102

Sorgen der Wollust, die Schät-ze zu meh-ren, der schäd-li-chen

A# dim.7 F#7 F#7 B minor

108

Dornen un - end - li - che Zahl, die Sorgen der Wollust, die Schät-ze zu

A7 D major F#7 B minor

114

meh - ren, die wer-den das Feu -

Acending scalar motive (but in descending sequence) contrasts with descending scalar melisma in mm. 51-52.

Word painting: Flickering melisma for "hell's flames."

B minor E7

120

- - - - - er der höl - li - schen Qual

Chromatic inflection for "höllischen Qual" ("hell's torment").

F#7 B minor N6 C7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 181

126

in E - - - - - wig-keit näh -

Word painting: Long note for "eternity."

F#7 B minor

132

Text painting: Flickering melisma for "feeding hell's flames."

B minor

138

- ren.

B minor B7 E minor A7

144

D major F#7

149

B minor B minor

Secco

4. Recitativo

181/4.

Soprano

•Seed lies dormant unless soil is prepared (181/4).

For biblical background, see note.



1. Von die - sen wird die Kraft er - stickt, der ed - le Sa - me liegt ver -
By these is (its) strength choked, the noble seed lies fruitless

Secco

D major

D# dim.7

Despite the negative sentiment at the beginning, the recitative begins and ends in the major mode, moving the focus to those who embrace the Word in Jesus' parable.

3. ge - bens. Wer sich nicht recht im Gei - ste schickt, sein Herz bei - zei - ten zum
Whoever himself not truly in-the Spirit (devotes), his heart in-god-time into

E minor

C# dim.

F#7

5. gu - ten Lan - de zu be - rei - ten, daß unser Herz die Sü - ßig - keiten schmecket, so
good soil to prepare, so-that our heart the sweetness tastes, which

B minor

E7

A major

The text alludes to Hebrews 6:4-5. ...Those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come...

7. uns dies Wort ent - decket, die Kräf - te dieses und des künft - gen Lebens.
to-us this Word reveals, the powers of-this and of-the future life.

A7

D major

D7

G major

A major

D major

Da capo

(Apparently based on an earlier work.)

181/5.

5. Coro

•Prayer: Make soil of our heart receptive to thy Word (181/5),

Trumpet
Strings
+Transverse flute
(later performance)
+Oboe (later
performance)
Continuo

1. Ritornello
(largely unrelated
to vocal sections).

D major

For Konrad Küster's comments on this movement, with translation, see note.



3 II (65 II)

6 (68)

Trp up 8va

For biblical background, see note.

Awkward text underlay suggests this text was adapted to earlier music.

9 (71)

Soprano 1. Subject 1.

Alto Laß, Höch - - ster, uns zu al - len Zeiten des Herzens Trost, dein hei - - lig

Tenore 2. Subject 2.

Basso Laß, Höchster, uns zu al - len Zei - tendes Herzens Trost, dein hei - lig

Laß,

The text uses language from Jeremiah 15:16: Thy words became to me a joy and the delight (Luther 1545: Freude und Trost) of my heart...

(p) Continuo alone...

D major

12 (74)

3. Sustained note for "all" [times].

4. Long melisma for "all" [times].

Wort, zu al - len Zei - - - - -

Höch - - ster, uns zu al - len Zei - ten des Her - zens Trost, dein

Wort, zu al - - - - -

Laß, Höchster, uns zu al - len Zei - - ten des Her - zens Trost, dein

E7 A major

A major

5. Short rising melisma treated in sequential imitation.

14.

ten des Herzens Trost, dein heilig Wort, dein heilig Wort, des Herzens Trost, - len Zeiten des Herzens Trost, dein heilig Wort, des Herzens

A major A7 D7 G major

16 II (78 II)

Wort: laß, Höchster, uns zu allen Zeiten des dein heilig Wort, zu al- Wort, dein heilig Wort, dein heilig Wort: laß, Höchster, uns zu allen Zeiten des Trost, dein heilig Wort, zu allen Zei-

Trp/FI/Vln I (f)

A7 D major

19 (81)

Herzens Trost, dein heilig Wort, des Herzens - len Zeiten des Herzens Trost, des Herzens Herzens Trost, dein heilig Wort, des Herzens Trost, - ten des Herzens Trost, dein heilig Wort, dein

(p)

D major

22.

Trost, dein hei-lig Wort, zu al-

Trost, dein hei-lig Wort, zu al-len Zei-

dein hei-lig Wort; laß, Höch-ster, uns zu al-len

hei-lig Wort; laß, Höch-ster, uns zu al-len

(f)

24 (86)

F#(7) B minor

-len Zei-ten des Her-zens Trost,

-ten, al-len Zei-ten des Her-zens

Zei-ten des Her-zens Trost, dein hei-lig Wort, des

Zei-ten des Her-zens Trost, dein hei-lig Wort,

(p) 7

26 II (88 II)

B minor B7

dein hei-lig Wort, zu al-len Zei-

Trost, dein hei-lig Wort; laß, Höch-ster, uns zu al-len

Her-zens Trost, zu al-

des Her-zens Trost; laß, Höch-ster, uns zu al-len

(f)

E major E7 A major A7 D major D7 G major

29.

ten des Her - zens Trost,
 Zei - tendes Herzens Trost, dein hei - lig Wort,
 - len, al - len Zei - ten des
 Zei - ten des Herzens Trost, dein hei - lig Wort, des Her - zens Trost,

32 (94) G major G major A7

laß, Höch - ster, uns zu al - len Zei - ten des
 des Her - zens Trost, zu al - len Zei - tendes
 Her - zens Trost, laß, Höchster, uns zu al - len Zei - tendes

35 (97) D major D major

Herzens Trost, dein hei - lig Wort!
 Her - zens Trost, dein heilig Wort!
 Herzens Trost, dein hei - lig Wort!
 dein heilig Wort!

Ritornello

D major

38(100)

D major

41(103)

Trp
up 8va

44(106) **B** Soprano B. Section set for two vocal parts only. Parallel 6ths and 3rds suggest sweetness...
 Alto Du kannst nach deiner All -
 Du kannst nach deiner All -
B
 (p) Continuo alone...

46II D major F#7

-machts hand allein ein fruchtbar gu-tes Land in unsern Her-zen
 -machts hand al-lein ein fruchtbar gu-tes Land in

49 B minor E7 A major C#7 F# minor F# minor

zu-be-rei-
 unsern Herzen zu-be-rei-

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52/

ten, du kannst nach dei - - ner All - - machts - hand al - lein.

ten, du kannst nach dei - - - ner Allmachts - hand al -

F# minor F# minor E7 A major A7

54II

ein fruchtbar gu - tes Land, ein fruchtbar gu - tes Land in unsern Herzen zu - be -

lein ein fruchtbar gu - tes Land, ein fruchtbar gu - tes Land in unsern Herzen

D major D major F#7

57/

rei -

zu - be - rei -

B minor A# dim.7 B minor

59II

- ten, in un - sern Her - - zen zu - be - rei - ten.

- ten, in un - - sern Her - - zen zu - be - rei - ten.

B minor B minor da capo