

"Whereas the librettist of Cantata 163, Salomo Franck, used the biblical account of the tribute money to create a very sturdy analogy between the coin and the heart of the Christian, here the wrath of the anonymous librettist is aroused exclusively by the cunning of the Pharisees who attempt to catch Jesus in a trap. The librettist, being a true child of his time, concludes that the Christian has no choice other than to turn his back on the world with all its falsehood and focus his mind on God alone. The murder of Abner by Joab (2 Samuel 3.27) is adduced as an example of worldly cunning. The four freely versified movements are ordered in clear antithesis: a recitative-aria pair each deals with the falsehood of the world (nos. 2–3) and the faithfulness of God (nos. 4–5). The cantata concludes with the first verse of the hymn 'In dich hab ich gehoffet,' Herr by Adam Reusner (1533)." See Alfred Dürr, revised and translated by Richard Jones, "The Cantatas of J. S. Bach," 627. Concerning the work's tonal plan, see Eric Chafe's comments in the side note.

This cantata may have reflected Bach's discouragement at the time (see note).

## Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/26; BC A160

23. S. after Trinity (BWV 163, 139, 52)

\*Philippians 3:17–21 (Our citizenship is in heaven.)

\*Matthew 22:15–22 (The Pharisees try to trap Jesus with the question: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?")

Librettist: Plausibly Christoph Birkmann (see note).

FP: 24 November 1726 (St. Nicholas) From Bach's

third annual cycle in Leipzig (see note.)

J.S. Bach

# Cantata No. 52

## Falsche Welt, dir trau ich nicht

### 1. Sinfonia

(Taken from an earlier work, BWV 1046a, an early version of the Brandenburg Concerto In F that has no violino 52/1. piccolo.) In the context of the overall libretto, the festive opening movement suggests celebration in face of opposition.

#### Instrumentation:

Corno I, II  
Oboe I, II  
Fagotto  
Vln I, II  
Vla  
SATB  
Continuo

Violins are used in the first aria, oboes in the second one. The recitatives use continuo alone. The opening sinfonia and closing chorale are for tutti forces.

"The vocal music is throughout for solo soprano only. All the richer by contrast is the instrumentation.... As in several other cantatas of that year, Bach used an instrumental movement from his pre-Leipzig period as introductory sinfonia." (Dürr/Jones, 628).

The horns play traditional hunting signals, with triplets. The festive affect suggests all will be well in the end.

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

13. Corno I, II & Obs/Bsn

mf Strings

R.H.

L.H.

F major

F major

C major

16. Corno I, II tacet

+Corno I & II

Corno I, II tacet

C7

G7

E minor deceptive

18. Strings

Obs/Bsn

Corno I & II

C major

D7

G minor

A7

D minor

21. Corno I, II tacet

C7

F major

B-flat major

23. Corno I & II

Oboes I, II, Bsn

Corno I, II tacet

F7

B-flat major

26. Tutti

B-flat major

A(7)

D minor

2

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

28. *mf* *cresc.* *Corno I & II alternate... L. H.* *D7* *D minor*

31. *G minor* *A(7)*

33. *Corno I, II & Oboes* *Corno I, II tacet* *Vlms* *D minor* *F major* *D7* *G major* *(G7)* *C major* *C7*

36. *Corno I & II on alternating half notes cresc.* *F major* *F7* *B-flat major* *F major*

38. *f* *cresc.* *F major* *G7* *E minor deceptive*

40. *climax* *ff* *A minor* *F# dim.7* *D7*

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

42. *dim.* *mf* Obs/Bsn Corno I, II tacet Str *mf* G7 C major C major (D7)

45. *cresc.* G major G7 E7 A minor A7 D minor

47. Corno I & II *mf* Oboes I, II/Bsn Corno I, II tacet D minor A minor A minor (F major) F major

50. Vins (See full score for correct octave) A7 D major (D7) G minor

52. *f* *mf* Corno I & II Ob I/Bsn Vln I G minor G minor C major F major G7

55. Corno I/Vln I +Corno II +Ob I C(7) F major

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

Obs/Bsn

57. Corno I & II

Corno I, II tacet

F major

F major

59. Obs/Bsn & Str

R. H.

L. H. ...

Corno I, II tacet

F major

C major

61. Corno I & II

cresc.

Oboes

L. H. *p*

Corno I, II tacet

C major

C7

D minor deceptive

G7

E minor deceptive

G7

C major

C7

64. Strings

Corno I, II on alternating half notes

cresc.

F major

F7

B-flat (7)

E-flat major

66. Corno I & II

cresc.

B-flat major

B-flat major

C(7)

69. *ff*

D minor deceptive

B dim.7

G7



J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

71.

*dim.* *mf*

C7 F major F major

73.

Corno II: 2 beats of triplets (see full score)

Corno I, II tacet

Corno I: 1 beat triplets

F major G7 C major

76.

Oboes

C major D7

78.

*tr*

*cresc.* Corno II: triplets

G minor A7 D minor C major

80.

Corno I: triplets

*f*

C7 F major F7 B-flat major

82.

Corno I, II tacet

*dim.*

*p*

C7 D minor deceptive F major F major

The opening text alludes to biblical passages such as Ezekiel 2:6: "And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though...you sit upon scorpions (Luther 1545: du wohnst unter den Skorpionen); be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house"; Luke 10:19: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you."

## 2. Recitativo

52/2.

1. Soprano

•Hypocrisy and deceit is rampant in the world (52/2). The text reflects the Gospel reading of the day, in which the Pharisees sent representatives to trap Jesus with the question: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?"

For biblical background, see note.



Fag.  
Org.  
Cont.

Fal - sche Welt, dir trau' ich nicht! Hier muss ich un - ter Skor - pi -

Secco

Chromaticism and harmonic instability depict the treachery of the world.

For word-for-word translations, see Unger, *Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts*.

C# dim.7

D7

F7

3.

onen und unter falschen Schlangen wohnen. Dein Angesicht, das noch so freundlich ist, sinnt auf ein

F# dim.7

G minor

B-flat major

B-flat 7

E-flat major

The text mixes two biblical accounts of the treachery of Joab (commander of King David's army): 2 Samuel 3:27–29 and 20:8–10 (see side note).

6.

heimliches Verderben: Wenn Jo.ab küsst, so muss ein frommer Armer sterben. Die Redlichkeit ist

E-flat 7

A-flat 7

F major

B-flat minor

A remote key for the unjust death of a poor, righteous man.

9.

aus der Welt verbannt, die Falschheit hat sie fort-getrieben, nun ist die Heuche-lei an

C7

D minor

F# dim.7

12.

ihrer Stelle blieben. Der beste Freund ist un-getreu: o jämmer - licher Stand!

G minor

D minor

F(7)

G# dim.7

E7

A minor

A minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

•Hypocritical world hates me but God is my friend! (52/3).

## 3. Aria

The opening motive, which permeates the entire movement, is related to the vocal opening. The violins begin in unison, then split, followed by the continuo in response. The "immerhin" motive is a figure of contemptuous dismissal, an expansion of the figura corta (see following text).

Motive of dismissal (A)

52/3.

1. Vlns

Viol. I/II  
Fag.  
Org.  
Continuo

*mf*

D minor  
For the significance of D minor, see side note.

3.

Vln I

3-part imitation of motive A inverted (see full score).

D minor

D minor

F# dim.7 D(7)

Vln II octave up (see full score).

G minor

C# dim.7

A7

D minor

G# dim.7

E7

A minor

Figura corta (joy?) = Motive B, in parallel thirds (Vlns).

8.

Repeated figura corta.

Motives A & B combined.

A7 D minor

D minor

D major

D7

11.

Figura corta (see side note).

*cresc.*

G minor

C# dim.7

A7

A7

D minor

## 13. Soprano

The figura corta is used here as a motive of dismissal ("immerhin": "whatever; I do not care"), related to the violin opening.

Immerhin,  
figura corta

Vlns

immerhin,

D minor

D minor



15.

im - mer - hin, wenn ich gleich ver - sto - ssen bin, im - mer - hin, immerhin,

*mf*

D minor

D minor

18.

wenn ich gleich ver - sto - ssen, ver - stossen bin, immerhin, immer -

D minor

Word painting: Fast melisma with initial descent to depict being cast off or dispossessed.

20.

hin, immer - hin, wenn ich gleich ver - sto -

D minor

D minor

22.

- ssen bin, immerhin, wenn ich gleich ver - sto - ssen bin, immer -

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

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

24.

hin, immerhin, wenn ich gleich ver-stossen bin, immerhin, immer-hin!

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

27.

D minor G# dim.7 E7 E7 A minor

29. B Section (Lines 3-5 presented twice).

Ist die fal-sche Welt mein Feind, o, so bleibt doch Gott mein

Violins in unison continue with the "dismissal" motive (the rest here is editorial continuo realization; see full score).

p cresc.

A minor D7 G7 C7 A7 D minor

Chromaticism and harmonic instability used to depict the treacherous world...

31.

Freund, der es redlich mit mir meint, red-lich mit mir meint.

Ritornello

mf

D minor F7 B-flat major C7 F major F major B-flat major F7

For the significance of F major, see side note.

34.

C7 F major

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

36.

Ist die fal\_sche Welt mein Feind, o, so bleibt doch Gott mein

F major A7 D7 B-flat major

Word painting: Sustained notes with melisma to depict God's steadfast, comforting friendship.

39.

Freund, o, so

G minor F7 B-flat major G7

41.

bleibt doch Gott mein Freund, der es red\_lich mit mir\_meint.

C minor G7

43.

D7 G minor

45.

Opening text returns in G minor (reprise of A Section modified).

Immer\_hin, immer\_hin,

G minor D7 G minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

47.

im - mer\_hin, wenn ich gleich ver\_stossen bin, im - mer - hin, immerhin,

G minor D major G minor G minor

*mf*

50. Melismas in fast notes for "cast off."

wenn ich gleich ver - sto - - - - - ssen bin, immerhin, immer.

D7 G minor

52.

hin, immerhin, wenn ich gleich ver - sto - - - - - ssen, verstoßen

G minor G minor C# dim.7 A(7)

55.

bin, immerhin, wenn ich gleich ver - sto - ssen bin, immer\_hin, immerhin, wenn

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



57.

ich gleich ver-sto-ssen bin, im-mer-hin, im-mer-hin!

C# dim.7 Secco

D minor

D minor

Dal Segno

## 4. Recitativo

52/4. 1. Sop.

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 8 measures.

• Faithfulness of God preserves me when worlds attacks (52/4).

The bible verse acts as a "dictum refrain," so that the rhyme scheme is:

Dictum  
ABAB  
Dictum  
CDDC  
Dictum.

The 3-fold statement of the dictum ("God is faithful") presumably references the Trinity.

"Dictum 1." **Gott ist ge-treu!** / er wird, er kann mich nicht ver-las-sen. / Will mich die

Compare 52/1, mm. 1-2. Text painting: Descending line for God not forsaking the poet

Rhyme A

A sentence from 1 Corinthians 10:13 ("[But] God is faithful" (Luther 1545: Aber Gott ist getreu)...) is repeated in (increasingly) arioso-like texture.

B-flat major

Fag.  
Org.  
Cont.

For biblical background, see note.



3. **Welt in ih-rer Ra-se-rei/ in ih-re Schlin-gen fas-sen, / so steht mir sei-ne Hil-fe**

NBA: und ihre Rhyme B

A

B dim.7

G7

C minor

F# dim.7

5.

bei. / **2. Gott ist ge-treu! auf seine Freundschaft will ich bauen / und meine Seele, Geist und**

Text painting: Ascending line for "building on God's friendship."

Allusion to 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

D7

G minor

G minor

C major

C# dim.7

8.

**C#** **Sinn, / und Al-les, was ich bin, ihm an-vertrauen. / 3. Gott ist ge-treu, ge-**

Word painting: Highest note for "all."

Continuo imitates

A7

D minor

D minor

F major

F7

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

11.

treu, Gott ist ge - treu, ge - treu, Gott ist ge - treu!

Continuo imitates.

B-flat major C7 F major F major

• Faithfulness to God avowed; world scorned (52/5). The triple meter (with frequent accents on beat 2), chordal texture, oboe instrumentation, and periodic phrase structure suggest a dance-like, comedic gaiety in mocking the world, as referenced in the text.

## 52/5. 5. Aria

Form:  
Ritornello (mm. 1-16) B M  
A (lines 1-2: mm. 17-44) B M-FM  
B (lines 3-5): mm. 45-80) FM-Dm  
A' (lines 1-2: mm. 80-104) B M  
Ritornello (dal segno)

1.

Oboes

Ritornello

Oboes play a quasi-jeering figure.

Ob. I/II/III  
Fag.  
Org.  
Continuo

mf

B-flat major E-flat major B-flat major

Upward-reaching gestures are followed by downward falling gestures.

5.

C minor C major C7 F# dim. G minor D dim. E-flat major

11.

F7 B-flat major G minor deceptive E-flat major E-flat major (F7) B-flat major

A Section. Lines 1-2 presented 3 times with internal repetitions.

Upward-reaching gestures place emphasis on various words. See Petzoldt, "Bach-Kommentar" 1:648.

For biblical background, see note.

## 16. Soprano

Ich halt' es mit dem lieben Gott, die Welt mag nur al - lei - ne bleiben,

p mf

B-flat major B-flat major B-flat major

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

21. 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 sort instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

Word painting: Sustained note for "to side with/to hold."

21. *Ritornello*

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

26. es mit dem lieben Gott, ich halt' es mit dem lieben Gott, die

B-flat major F major

31. Welt mag nur al-lei-ne blei-ben, ich halt' es mit dem lie-ben

(D7) G minor C# dim.

36. Gott, die Welt mag nur al-lei-ne, die Welt mag nur al-lei-ne bleiben.

D minor F7 D minor F major B-flat major C(7) F major C7 D minor deceptive F major

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

B Section (lines 3–5) presented twice with internal repetitions. Greater animation to depict directing ridicule at the world.

41.

Patter diction underscores the operatic quality. Here the vocal figure suggests a smug retort to the opposing world.

**Gott mit mir, und ich mit**  
Text painting: Parallel V7-I progressions (with contrary motion) for "God with me" and "I with God."

F major F7 B-flat major C7 F major F major F major F7

46.

Gott, Gott mit mir, und ich mit Gott, al-so kann ich sel-ber—

*cresc.*

B-flat major G7 C minor A-flat major C minor B dim.7 C minor B-flat7

50. Word painting: Long, animated, sequentially rising melisma over a static pedal, for "Spott" ([direct my] mockery).

Spott,

*mf*

G7 G pedal... C minor (G7) C minor

54.

al-so kann ich sel-ber Spott mit den fal-schen Zungen

Oboes tacet Editorial realization of continuo...

G7 C major C7 F(7) B-flat major D(7)



# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

57.

trei-ben, mit den fal-schen Zun-gen trei-ben.

Oboes

Ritornello

G minor

G minor

61.

Gott mit mir, und ich mit Gott, Gott mit

G minor

D major

D7

G minor

65.

mir, und ich mit Gott, al-so kann ich sel-ber Spott,

B-flat 7

E-flat major

F7

B-flat major

F7

Word painting: Long, animated, sequentially rising melisma over a static pedal, for "Spott" ([direct my] mockery).

69.

al-so

B-flat major

F pedal...

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

73.

kann ich sel-ber Spott mit den fal-schen Zun-gen trei-ben, al - - - so

Oboes tacet; right hand here is editorial realization of continuo.

*mf*

B-flat major B-flat major

Text painting: Displacement of metrical stress and fast notes to depict ridiculing "deceitful tongues."

76.

kann ich sel-ber Spott mit den fal-schen Zungen trei-ben, mit den fal-schen

*cresc.* *f*

A(7) (D minor) B-flat major A7 D minor

A' Section. Lines 1-2 presented 3 times with internal repetitions.

79.

Zungen trei - - ben. Ich halt' es mit dem lie-ben Gott, die

Oboes *p*

D minor B-flat major B-flat major

83.

Welt mag nur al-lei-ne blei - ben,

*mf* Ritornello

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

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 52

88.

Word painting: Sustained note for "halt."

ich halt' es mit dem lie-ben Gott, ich halt' es

B-flat major B-flat major B-flat major (G7)

93.

mit dem lie-ben Gott, die Welt mag nur al-lei-ne blei-

C minor C major C7 E-flat major (D7) G minor

97.

ben, ich halt' es mit dem lie-ben Gott, die Welt mag nur al-

G minor (B-flat 7) B-flat 7 E-flat major F7 B-flat major F7 G minor deceptive

101.

lei-ne, al-lei-ne, die Welt mag nur al-lei-ne blei-ben.

B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major F7 B-flat major B-flat major Dal Segno

L. H. mf

The 2 horns reappear: "A pair of horns—otherwise used only in the introductory sinfonia—are added to the instrumental ensemble. Horn I reinforces the chorale melody in the soprano, while horn II has an independent part due to its restriction to the notes of the natural harmonic series." Dürr/Jones 628.

The chorale functions as a catechismal response.

## 52/6. 6. Choral Eigene Melodie

• Prayer: I trust in thee; let me not be confounded! (52/6). This is the first stanza of a 7-stanza chorale, a paraphrase of Psalm 31: 1-5 (1-6 in German bible), by Adam Reusner (1496-ca. 1575).

A keyword, "Spotte" links this chorale stanza to the foregoing aria.

The stanza paraphrases biblical psalm verses such as Psalm 25:2: "O my God, in thee I trust, let me not be put to shame...." See also Psalm 31:1, 31:7, 71:1.

For biblical background, see note.

**Soprano** 1. In dich hab' ich ge-hof-fet, Herr, hilf, dass ich nicht zu

**Alto** In dich hab' ich ge-hof-fet, Herr, hilf, dass ich nicht zu

**Tenore** In dich hab' ich ge-hof-fet, Herr, hilf, dass ich nicht zu

**Basso** In dich hab' ich ge-hof-fet, Herr, hilf, dass ich nicht zu

**Corno II**

F major



5. Schanden werd', noch e-wig-lich zu Spot-te. Das

Schan-den werd', noch e-wig-lich zu Spot-te. Das

Schan-den werd', noch e-wig-lich zu Spot-te. Das

Schanden werd', noch e-wig-lich zu Spot-te. Das

F major

9. bitt' ich dich, er-hal-te mich in dei-ner Treu', Herr Got-te!

bitt' ich dich, er-hal-te mich in dei-ner Treu', Herr Got-te!

bitt' ich dich, er-hal-te mich in dei-ner Treu', Herr Got-te!

bitt' ich dich, er-hal-te mich in dei-ner Treu', Herr Got-te!

(D7) G minor D minor F(7) B-flat major F major F major