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NBA I/26; BC A159

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: Unknown

FP: 12 November 1724 (St. Nicholas). This cantata belongs to Bach's chorale cantata cycle (see note).

The central idea of the cantata is "God as man's friend," derived from the last line of each chorale stanza (see note for chorale text and translation), which itself alludes to biblical passages such as James 2:23 (Abraham identified as a friend of God) and John 15:15 (Jesus calls his disciples friends).

Chorale Cantata; some material lost.

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 139

Wohl dem, der sich auf seinen Gott

(Chorale Verse 1) • God as friend: Relying on him in times of opposition (139/1).

Nº 1. Vers 1. Coro.

(Tempo ordinario ♩ = 72.)

139/1.

Instrumentation:
Ob d'amore I, II
Vln I, II
Vla
SATB
Continuo

Regarding lost parts and attempted reconstructions, see note.

- Form (Rhyme: ABABCC)
- Rit (mm. 1-11) EM
- Line 1 (11-16) EM-BM
- Rit. (16-20) BM-EM
- Line 2 (20-25) EM
- Rit (25-35) EM
- Line 3 (35-40=11-16) EM-BM
- Rit. (40-44=16-20) BM-EM
- Line 4 (44-49=20-25) EM
- Rit (49-53) EM-Cm
- Line 5 (53-59) F#m-BM
- Rit (59-65) BM-G#m
- Line 6 (65-71) G#m-EM
- Rit (1-11) EM

Through diminution, the melody escalates into a flurry of 16th notes that subsume the chorale tune. It then evolves into an agitated, leaping countermelody (developed through a series of sequential repetitions) that evokes the oppositional forces described in the lyrics. Martin Petzoldt notes that tradition named five enemies of Christ: world, devil, death, hell, and sin. See *Bach-Kommentar* 1:550, 642, 2:915. The opening chorale stanza mentions all of these except death, which appears in the last stanza (movement no. 6).

The opening gesture (from the first phrase of the chorale) is played by the Vln I in parallel 6ths with Ob d'am I, suggesting the sweetness of having God for a friend, as referenced in the text.

The four-note diatonic ascending figure permeates the whole movement, suggests lifting one's hope upward to "God as friend" as referenced in the text (see note).

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27

E7 A major B7 E major F#7 B major

29

B major E major C#7 F# minor

31

F# minor B7 E major

33

E major

35 **C** Chorale text line 3 (music of Stollen 1 repeats). Accompanying voices have thematic material in diminution, treated imitatively.

Stollen 2 of chorale's bar form.

Den mag gleich

Den mag gleich Sün-de, Welt und Tod, den mag gleich Sün-de,

Den mag gleich Sün-de, Welt und Tod, Welt und

= m. 11. Ob d'am I Ob d'am II

= m. 12.

E major E major

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37

Sün - - - de, Welt und Tod
 Welt und Tod, den mag gleich Sünde, Welt und Tod, Sün - de,
 Tod, den mag gleich Sünde, Welt und Tod, Sün - de, Welt und Tod, Sün - de,
 Den mag gleich Sünde, Welt und Tod, den mag gleich Sünde, Welt und Tod, Sün - de,

= m. 13. = m. 14. = m. 15. +Str

Written out version of m. 15.

C#7 F# minor B7 E major F#7

39 ff

Welt und Tod
 Welt und Tod
 Welt und Tod

Ritornello = m. 16. Ob d'am I = m. 17.
 Vln I
 Ob d'am II

B major B major C#7 F# minor

42

und
 und al-le Teufel has -
 und al-le

Accompanying voices have thematic material in diminution, treated imitatively.

D Chorale text line 4.

= m. 18. = m. 19. Ob d'am I = m. 20. Ob d'am II

F# minor B7 E major E major

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45

al - le Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel -
 Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le
 und al - le Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel, al - le Teu - fel.

= m. 21. = m. 22. = m. 23.

E major

47 II

- sen,
 has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel has - sen,
 Teu - fel has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel has - sen.
 has - sen, und al - le Teu - fel has - sen.

Ob d'am II
 = m. 24 with a few changes.
 Ritornello

E major

B major

E major

F#7

50

+Str
 Ob d'am II
 Ob d'am I up 8va

B major

E major

E major

E major

G# major

C# minor

B7

E major

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53

E Chorale text line 5. Accompanying voices have thematic material in diminution, treated imitatively.

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

so bleibt er den noch wohl ver-gnügt, so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt,
 so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt, so bleibt er dennoch
 so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt, so bleibt er

Ob d'am I
 Ob d'am II

C# minor C#7 F# minor B(7) E major Sequential bass...

55 II

er den noch wohl ver-gnügt, so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt, so bleibt er
 wohl ver-gnügt, so bleibt er den noch wohl ver-gnügt,
 dennoch wohl vergnügt, so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt, so bleibt er den

Vln I up 8va
 Vln II up 8va
 +Vla

E major E major E major

58

gnügt,
 dennoch, dennoch bleibt er wohl ver-gnügt,
 so bleibt er dennoch wohl vergnügt,
 noch wohl ver-gnügt, Ritornello

Vln I
 Ob d'am I
 Ob d'am II

F#7 B major B major E major C#7 F# minor

+Vln II (see score)

+Vla

61

F# minor G#7 (C# minor)

63

C# minor D#7 G# minor

65 **F** Chorale text line 6. Accompanying voices have thematic material in diminution, treated imitatively.

wenn er nur Gott

wenn er nur Gott zum Freun - - - de kriegt, wenn er nur

wenn er nur Gott zum Freun - - - de kriegt, nur Gott zum Freunde, wenn er nur

wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt, wenn er nur

67 I

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

zum Freun - - - de kriegt.

Gott zum Freunde kriegt, +Vln II wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde

Gott zum Freunde kriegt, +Vla wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt, wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde

Gott zum Freunde kriegt, wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt, zum Freun - de,

67 II

E7 A major B7

70

kriegt, wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt.

kriegt, wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt.

wenn er nur Gott zum Freunde kriegt. Ritornello

+Vln I Ob d'am I Vln I Ob d'am II Vln I

E major E7 A major E major

Dal Segno. %

No. 2. Aria.

139/2. (Moderato ♩ = 80.) (Based on Chorale Verse 2) • God as friend means the foe presents no danger (139/2).

1. Editorial reconstruction/realization. Vln I

mf

A major Bass figure treated as a quasi-ostinato. B7 E major E7

Sequential bass...

The ritornello is derived from the contrasting material in the aria:
 1) steadfast "God is my friend" motive
 2) raging 16ths of the enemy
 (See note for comments by Alfred Dürr.)

5 Vln I sequence...

A major B7 E major

9 (Choral.) Editorial addition of chorale phrase.

E major Pulsing bass suggests aggression of the enemies mentioned... E major (E7) A major B7

13

E major E7 A7 F#7 B minor

17

E7

A major

21

A major

A major

A Tenore. "God is my friend" motive permeates the entire movement, and contrasts with the 16th-note passages representing the raging of the enemy (see note above for comment by Alfred Dürr).

For biblical background, see note.



25

Gott ist mein Freund, Gott ist mein Freund; washilft das

A major

B7

E7

Bass figure treated as a quasi-ostinato.

Word painting: Leaping melismas for "das Toben" ("the raging").

29

To - ben, washilft das To - ben, so wi - der mich ein Feind er -

A major

A major

A7

D major

Editorial addition of chorale phrase.

32

ho - ben! Gott ist mein Freund, Gott ist mein

F#(7)

B minor

G major

E minor

Editorial addition of chorale phrase.

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Editorial addition of chorale phrase.

36

Freund; was hilft das To - ben, was hilft das To - ben, so

F#7 B minor

Text painting: Line rises to high note for "enemy raised up against me."

39

wider mich ein Feind er - ho - ben! ich bin getrost bei Neid und Hass, ich bin ge -

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

43

trost, ich bin ge - trost, ich bin ge - trost, getrost bei Neid und Hass.

Ritornello C# minor

47

C# minor

50

Gott ist mein Freund, Gott ist mein Freund,

C# minor F#7 B minor E7

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54

Gott ist mein Freund, Gott ist mein Freund; washilft das

A major B7 E7

Text painting: Long, energetic melisma for "das Toben" ("the raging").

Editorial addition of chorale phrase.

58

To - - - - - ben, washilft das

A major A major

61

To - - ben, so wi - der mich ein Feind er - ho - - ben, so

A major F#7

The text's reference to deceitful and envious enemies alludes to the Gospel reading, in which the Pharisees try to trap Jesus. See note.

64

wi - der mich ein Feind er - ho - - ben! ich bin ge - trost bei Neid und

B minor E7 A major

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67

Hass, ich bin ge - trost, ich bin ge - trost, ich bin - ge -

A major

70

trost, getrost bei Neid und Hass.

mf Ritornello

A major

Up 1 8va (see full score).

B7

B Section.

73

Ja,

E major

E7

A major

A major

E# dim.7

76

re - det nur die Wahrheit spär - lich, ja,

F# minor

F# minor

B7

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79

re-det nur die Wahrheit spär-lich, seid immer falsch,

E major E major A# dim.7

82

was thut mir das? seid im-mer falsch, was thut mir das?

A# dim.7 A# dim.7 F#(7)

85

seid immer falsch, seid immer falsch, was thut mir das, seid

B minor B minor

88

Text painting: Neapolitan 6th for "always false." **D**

immer falsch, was thut mir das?

mf Ritornello

N6 F#7 B minor A7 D major

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Text painting: Obligato becomes more energized for reference to scoffers.

92

ihr Spöt - - ter, ihr Spöt - - ter, ihr

E(7) A major B7

95

Spöt - ter seid mir un - ge - fähr - lich, ihr Spöt - - -

E major

Text painting: Long, energetic melisma for "Spötter" ("scoffers").

98

- ter, ihr Spötter, ihr

E major E major

Editorial addition of choral phrase.

101

Spöt - ter seid mir unge - fähr - lich, ihr Spöt - ter seid mir un - ge -

E major C#7 F# minor

104

fähr - lich, ihr seid mir un - ge - fähr - lich, ihr Spöt -

B7 E major E major

107

- ter, ihr Spöt - - ter, ihr seid mir un - ge - fähr - lich.

Secco E major Da Capo. E major

Nº 3. Recitativo.

139/3. 1. **Alto.** •Christ's children sent among wolves as he too was (139/3) Not based on a chorale stanza.

Alfred Dürr notes that this recitative is an insertion that links to the day's Gospel reading (see note).

Der Hei - land sen - det ja die Sei - nen recht mitten in der Wöl - fe

Secco C# major E# dim.7

The reference to wolves alludes to Jesus' words in Matthew 10 as well as to a later passage serving as the day's Gospel reading, in which the Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus by asking whether he approved paying the Roman tax (see note at no. 2). In his commentary on the day's Gospel, Johann Olearius (whose biblical commentary was in Bach's personal library) noted the similarity between the Roman tax and the Turkish tax of his own day (cited in Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 1:643).

Alto is often the voice of the believing soul.

For biblical background, see note.

3

Wuth. Um ihn hat sich der Bösen Rotte, zum Schaden und zum Spotte, mit List gestellt: doch

Tritone (diabolus in musica)

F# minor B# dim.7 C# minor

The recitative, set syllabically, serves as a short transition to the aria, which colorfully depicts misfortune's onslaught.

6

da sein Mund so weisen Ausspruch thut, so schützt er mich auch vor der Welt.

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

Rondo Form (Rhyme: ABBACC)
 Note: Line 3 ("Plötzlich...") changes from iambic to dactylic meter.
 Measure numbers do not reflect cadences that overlap formal divisions.
 Rit (mm. 1-12) C meter, (poc' allegro), F#m
 Text lines 1-2 (13-26) F#m-C#M
 Line 3 (27-36) 6/8 meter, vivace, C#M-AM
 Rit (37-39) C meter, (poc' allegro), AM
 Lines 4-6 (40-45) C meter, andante, AM-Bm
 Rit (46-50) C meter, vivace, Bm
 Lines 4-6 (51-57) C meter, andante, Bm-C#m
 Rit (58-69) C meter, vivace (poc' allegro?), F#m
 Lines 1-2 (70-83), F#m-C#M
 Line 3 (84-88) 6/8 meter, vivace, C#M-DM
 Lines 1-2 (89-92) C meter, poc' allegro, DM-F#M
 Line 3 (93-102) 6/8 meter, vivace, F#M-F#m

Aria, 139/4. (Based on Chorale Verse 3) • God as friend in times of adversity (139/4).
(Poc' allegro) $\text{♩} = 72$. The descending chromatic fourth (traditional symbol of lament) is presented in several ways (F#-C#, F#-C#, B-F#) - see note.

1. Vln

Ritornello *mf*

Ob d'am I, II

F# minor C#7 F# major F#7 B major B7

Continuo line = "das Unglück schlägt" ("misfortune strikes").

Although the dotted rhythm might suggest a French overture, the application here appears different.

In this aria, unity of affect gives way to the differentiated portrayal of 3 literary images:
 1) the strikes of misfortune
 2) sudden intervention of the divine hand
 3) comforting light
 These different images prompt changes of tempo and meter.

E major E7 A major A7 E dim.7

Concerning the violoncello piccolo, see notes here.

Alternating notes between unison oboes d'amore and continuo bass play the descending chromatic fourth, to a flatward harmonic progression.

5

C#7 F#7

7

B minor G#7 C# major C#7

9

F# minor F# minor

11

F# minor

The vagaries of misfortune "hitting from all sides referenced in the text is reflected in frequent harmonic instability, particularly cadences in on a major chord followed immediately by alteration of the chord to a dominant seventh, leading to modulation flatward in the circle of fifths.

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Text painting: Swirling 16th notes in the violin with a jerking rhythm in voice and continuo in a fast tempo depict the misfortune like a heavy chain striking the speaker and wringing itself around him, as referenced in the text.

13 **A Basso.**

The movement encompasses 3 contrasting literary pictures, which Bach differentiates with contrasting tempos and meters.

Das Unglück schlägt

The singer adopts the continuo line.

auf al - len Sei - - - ten

For biblical background, see note.

Continuo intermittent exchanges with voice and upper instruments (see full score).

F# minor

F# major

F#7

B major

B7



15

um mich ein cent - - - - - nerschwe - res Band,

E major

E7

A major

A7

D major

E# dim.7

17

um mich ein cent - nerschwe - res Band;

F# minor

C#7

19

das Un - glücks schlägt auf al - len

F# minor

F# minor

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21

Sei - ten, das Unglücks schlägt auf al - len Sei - - ten um mich

F# major F#7 B major B7 E major E7 A major A7

23

- ein cent - ner - schwe - - res, ein cent - nerschwe - res

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

25

Band, um mich ein cent - ner - schwe - - res

C# pedal F# minor F# minor

Text painting: The sudden change referenced in the text is marked by a change from iambic to dactylic meter. Bach correspondingly changes to 6/8 meter, triadic melody, and a vivace tempo.

27 **B Vivace.** (♩ = 72.)

Band. Doch plötzlich erschei - net die hel - fen - de Hand, doch

Ob d'amore I, II Yet suddenly appears the helping hand

Vln (up 8va) F# minor B minor

Harmonic progression flatward in the circle of fifths.

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30

plötzlich erschei - net die hel - fen - de Hand, die hel -

E major A major D major

33

fende

E major F# minor D major E major A major

37 (Poc' allegro. Tempo I.)

Hand! Vin

Ob d'am I, II

Ritornello

A major A7 D major

Continuo down 8va (see full score).

Syncopations appear to underscore misfortune's assault.

38 II

40 C Andante. (♩ = 60.)

Mir scheint des Trostes Licht von wei -

(Choral.)

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

Text painting: "Comfort's light appears to me from afar" is set in casual tempo as a cantabile melody with continuo alone, the words "from afar" extended and chromatically inflected to depict a yearning wait for the light of comfort to arrive.

NBA: weiten

42

tem; da lern' ich, da lern' ich,

A7 F#7 B minor B minor A7

44

da lern' ich erst, dass Gott al_ _lein der Men_schen be_ _ster Freund muss

B minor F#7 B minor

Vivace. (♩ = 88.)

46

sein.

mf

B minor B minor

48 II

E7 F#7 B minor

D Andante. (♩ = 60.)

Text painting: Playful, cantabile melody in casual tempo with continuo alone for "Comfort's light appears to me from afar."

51

Mir scheint des Trostes Licht von wei_

Continuo alone: All else, including addition of the chorale, is editorial.

p

B minor C#7

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53 NBA: weiten

tem; da lern' ich, da lern'

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

55

ich erst.dass Gott al.lein der Menschen be.ster Freund muss sein.

G#7 C# minor C# minor

Vivace.
E (Poc' allegro. Tempo I.)

58

Obs d'am mf Vln up 8va

F# minor F# major F#7 B major B7

60

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

62

C#7 F# minor F#7

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64

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

66

F# minor F# minor

68

70

F

Das Unglück schlägt auf al - len Sei - ten

Obs d'am & Vln trade motive.

Obs d'am up 8va

Vln up 8va

p

F# minor F# major F#7 B minor B7

72

um mich ein cent - nerschwe - res Band,

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

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74

um mich ein cent - nerschwe - res Band;

Vln

F# minor
C#7

76

das Un - glück schlägt auf al - len

F# minor F# minor

78

Sei - ten, das Unglück schlägt auf al - len Sei - - - ten um mich

F# major F#7 B major B7 E major E7 A major A7

80

ein cent - ner - schwe - - - res, ein cent - nerschweres

D major E# dim.7 F# minor

82

Band, um mich ein cent-ner-schwe-res

C#(7) F# minor F# minor
C# pedal

Text painting: The sudden change referenced in the text is marked by a change from iambic to dactylic meter. Bach correspondingly changes to 6/8 meter, triadic melody, and a vivace tempo.

84 **G Vivace. (Tempo II.)**

Band. = m. 27. Doch plötz-lich er-schei-net die = m. 28.

Vln up 8va

C# major F# minor

86

hel-fen-de Hand, doch plötzlich erschei-net die hel-fen-de Hand!

E major A major

89 **Poco' allegro. (Tempo I.)**

Das Un-glück schlägt auf al-len Sei-ten

p

D major F#7 B minor G#7

91

um mich ein cent - nerschwe - res Band.

C# major C#7 F# minor

Text painting: The sudden change referenced in the text is marked by a change from iambic to dactylic meter. Bach correspondingly changes to 6/8 meter, triadic melody and a vivace tempo.

H Vivace. (Tempo II.)

93

Doch plötz - lich er - schei - net die hel - fen - de Hand, doch

F# major B minor E7

A long melisma underscores the "helping" hand of God.

96

plötz - lich er - schei - net die hel - fende Hand die hel -

A major C#7 F# minor

p Obs d'am & Vln alternate...

99

F# minor

Poc' allegro. (Tempo I.)

102

- - - - - fen - de Hand!

Vln

mf Ritornello
Obs d'am up 8va

F# minor

104

F# minor

F# minor

F# minor

Martin Petzoldt argues that, in adapting ideas from the chorale's 4th stanza, the librettist modified the pietistic theology of the chorale to a more traditional Lutheran understanding of sin (see note here and note at no. 6).

Nº 5. Recitativo. (Based on Chorale Verse 4) • Sin's burden is greatest foe; removed by the Savior (139/5).
139/5. 1. Soprano.

Ja, trag'ich gleich den grössten Feind in mir, (die schwere Last der Sünden. mein

G#7

B# dim.7

C#7

E# dim.7

F#7

A "halo" of sustaining strings underscores the comforting inner rest provided by the Savior ("God as friend") despite an inner enemy of sin and Satan's cunning.

For biblical background, see note.

The text references the Gospel reading of the day (Matthew 22:21), Jesus saying, "Render...to God the things that are God's."

4

Heiland lässt mich Ruhe finden. Ich ge-be Gott, was Gottes ist. das In-ner-ste der

B major

B major

E(7)

7

Seelen, Will er sie nun er-wählen, so weicht der Sünden Schuld, so fällt des Satans List.

C#7

F#7

B7 E major

E major

(Verse 5) • God as friend allows me to defy all foes (139/6).

Nº 6. Vers 5. Choral. (Mel: „Mach's mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güt“) = 1628 tune by Johann Hermann Schein (1586–1630).



(5) 139/6.

Soprano. 1.
+Ob d'am I, II
Vln I

Da - he - ro Trotz der Höl - len Heer! Trotz auch des To - des Ra - chen!
Trotz al - ler Welt! mich kann nicht mehr ihr Pochen trau - rig ma - chen!

Alto.
+Vln II

Da - he - ro Trotz der Höl - len Heer! Trotz auch des To - des Ra - chen!
Trotz al - ler Welt! mich kann nicht mehr ihr Pochen trau - rig ma - chen!

Tenore.
+Vla

Da - he - ro Trotz der Höl - len Heer! Trotz auch des To - des Ra - chen!
Trotz al - ler Welt! mich kann nicht mehr ihr Pochen trau - rig ma - chen!

Basso.

Da - he - ro Trotz der Höl - len Heer! Trotz auch des To - des Ra - chen!
Trotz al - ler Welt! mich kann nicht mehr ihr Pochen trau - rig ma - chen!

E major B major F# major (B7) E major B major

For biblical background, see note.



9

Gott ist mein Schutz, mein' Hilf' und Rath: Wohl dem, der Gott zum Freunde hat.

Gott ist mein Schutz, mein' Hilf' und Rath: Wohl dem, der Gott zum Freunde hat.

Gott ist mein Schutz, mein' Hilf' und Rath: Wohl dem, der Gott zum Freunde hat.

Gott ist mein Schutz, mein' Hilf' und Rath: Wohl dem, der Gott zum Freunde hat.

Johann Christoph Ruben

E major E7 A major C#7 F# minor B major G# minor N6 E major E major