

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 47

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Form: Chorus - Aria (S) - Recit (B) - Aria (B) - Chorale (a chiastic form)

Bach often used chiastic (x-shaped/symmetrical) forms to portray Luther's theology crucis, which stressed the inverted order of God's revelation: that God chose to reveal himself through suffering rather than through glory and the corollary that the Christian disciple must likewise accept—and even choose—cross-bearing over self-exaltation. In Bach's chiastic forms, center movements (where the mirror image begins) often provide the crux of the matter. There antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text). Examples include BWV 4/5, 5/4, 7/4, 9/4, 17/4, 19/4, 24/3, 28/3, 29/5, 31/5, 45/4, 47/3, 48/4, 58/1, 63/4, 65/4, 75/4, 75/11, 78/4, and 140/4, among many others.

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 47

Wer sich selbst erhöht, der soll erniedriget werden

1. Coro

• Reversal of status (exalting vs. humbling oneself): Luke 14:11 (47/1). This biblical verse is the summary of the Gospel reading for the day. It reoccurs in Luke 18:14. The long opening chorus shares similarities with 39/1, presented 16 weeks earlier, including the presentation of thematic material in a complex ritornello.

Form of 47/1 (see Dürr/Jones, 566):

A. (mm. 1-45) Sinfonia (a, a')

B. (45-103) Choral fugue b (T-A-S-B solo?), instr. partly motivic (a), partly

silent, oboes finally thematic

(5th subject entry at m. 81)

Conclusion (c, c: 89-103)

B'. (104-183) Choral fugue (b', (S-A-T-B tutti?),

instr. from 2nd subject entry colla parte,

oboes finally thematic (5th

subject entry at m. 144)

Conclusion

(c, c': 152-183)

A. (184-228)

Sinfonia (a, a')

+choral insertion

The oppositional aspect of the cantata text (proud vs. humble) is reflected in the polychoral treatment of the instruments (strings vs. oboes).

Ob I & II, then continuo foreshadow the "erhöhet" melisma, the core of the later fugue subject (see mm. 46-48).

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26

D minor D minor G major G7

Progression downward in the circle of fifths...

30

C minor F major F7 B-flat major B-flat 7

Continuo bass plays "erhöhet" melisma.

35

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

Vln I & II play "erhöhet" melisma.

39

G7 G pedal... C minor G major G7 C minor

Continuo bass plays "erhöhet" melisma.

43. A

Soprano

Alto

Tenore

Basso

Wersichselbster - hö

Oboes are octave higher, see full score.

B. Choral fugue (b) (First exposition: T-A-S-B [solo?]), instruments partly motivic (a), partly silent, oboes finally thematic (5th subject entry) Conclusion (c, c).

"The two halves of the verse, which constitute a rhetorical antithesis ('whoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted'), are set respectively as subject and countersubject of the fugue." See David Schulenberg, "Oxford Composer Companions. J. S. Bach," 522. The subject rises, then falls; the countersubject rises, then falls, each depicting their respective texts.

Word painting: First text phrase is set as a fugue subject that rises laboriously (1 octave), then falls chromatically with sighing figures (1 octave).

Note: Fugue is often associated with dogma. Compare "Wir haben ein Gesetz" in the St. John Passion.

Tritone at end of rising melisma.

48

Oboes Strings

D7 G minor G minor G7 C minor

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49

Wer sich selbst er-
-het, der soll er-nie-dri-get wer-den, und wer sich selbst er-nie-

Sighing figures

Tritone, then syncopated arrival on long note at the end of the melisma, as if exalting oneself (as referenced in the text) takes considerable (even ungainly) effort. See Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar" 1:509.

The second phrase of the biblical text is set as a countersubject that falls with sighing figures, then rises.

D7 G minor D minor G minor G minor G minor D minor D minor

55

hö-het, der soll er-
-dri-get, der soll er-hö-

Continuo alone (mm. 58-62)

D7 G minor A7 B-flat major D7 G minor E7

60

Wersichselbster-hö
-nie-dri-get wer-den, und wer sich selbster-nie-
-het wer-den, der soll er-hö-het

B + Instruments

A major D minor D minor (G7) C minor G minor G7

66

- het, der soll er - nie - dri - get wer -
 dri - get, der soll er - hö - het wer -
 wer - den; der soll er - nie - dri - get, er - nie - dri - get wer -

Continuo alone (mm. 67-71).

C minor D7 E-flat major G minor G minor

71

den, und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get, der -
 den, der soll er - hö - het
 den, wer sich selber - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get

Wer sich selbst er - hö

+Instruments

G minor A major D minor C# dim.7 D7 G minor

76

- soll er - hö - het wer - den, der
 werden, er - hö - het, er - hö -
 werden, - der soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den,
 - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den, und wer sich

Continuo alone (mm. 76-80).

D minor C# dim.7 D minor D(7)

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95 96.

wer sich selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - driget
 wer sich selbst er - hö -
 wer sich selbst er - hö -
 wer sich selbst er - hö -

C minor E dim.(7) F minor (F7) F(7)

101

wer - den, - het, - het, - het, - het, wer sich selbst er - hö -

B'. Choral fugue (b') (Second Exposition: S-A-T-B [tutti?]), instruments from 2nd subject entry colla parte, oboes finally thematic (as above). Conclusion (c, c').

The descending order of vocal entries may signify "being abased," as referenced in the text.

B-flat major A7 D7 G minor

106

- het, der soll er - nie - dri - get wer -

G7 C minor D7 E-flat major G7 C minor G minor

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112

den, und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get, der -
 wer sich selbst er - hö -

Instruments doubling voices

G minor A major D minor D7 G minor C7

117

- soll er - hö - - - - - het wer - den,
 - het, der soll er - - - nie - dri - get wer - - den, und wer sich

A7 D7 G minor D minor D minor F major

122

der soll er - hö - **E**
 selbst er - niedrigt, wer sich selbst er - nie -
 wer sich selbst er - hö -

(G7) C major D7 G minor G7

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142. 144.

wer - den, und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get.

hö -

8 - het wer - den, er - hö - het, der soll er - hö - het wer - den, und

wer - den, und wer sich selbst er - nie

Oboes with 5th subject entry.

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

147

der soll er - hö - het, er - hö - het wer -

het wer - den, soll er - hö - het wer -

8 wer sich selbst er - niedri - get, der soll er - hö - het, er - hö - het wer -

dri - get, der soll er - hö - het wer -

A-flat major B-flat 7 B-flat minor F major E-flat major

152

den. Wer sich

den. Conclusion (c, c'). Wer sich selbst er - hö - het, der

8 den. Wer sich selbst er - hö -

den. Oboes up 1 octave, see full score. Wer sich selbst er - hö -

E-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major B-flat 7

172. **G**

und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get, der -
 den, und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get, soll er - hö -
 den, und wer sich selbst er - nie - dri - get, soll er - hö -
 wer sich selbst er - hö -

177 **G minor A major D minor D7 G minor**

soll er - hö - het wer - den,
 - het wer - den, er - hö - het wer - den, und wer sich
 - het wer - den, er - hö - het wer - den,
 - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den, der soll er -

182 **C# dim.7 D minor D minor D minor D minor H**

der soll er - hö - - - - het wer - den. Wer sich
 selbst er - hö - - - - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den. Wer sich
 der soll er - hö - - - - het wer - den. Wer sich
 nie - dri - get werden, soll er - nie - dri - get werden. Wer sich

A. Sinfonia (a) with choral insertion (quasi-capo of sinfonia).

F major G7 C minor D7 G minor

187

selbst er - hö - het, der
selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri -
selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der
selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der

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

192

soll er - nie - dri - get - wer - den.
get, er - nie - dri - get wer - den.
soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den.
- dri - get, er - nie - dri - get, er - nie - dri - get wer - den.

Ob I, II

D7 G minor D pedal...

197

Wer sich selbst, wer sich
Wer sich selbst, wer sich
Wer sich selbst, wer sich
Wer sich selbst, wer sich

Sinfonia (a') with choral insertion.

G minor A7 D minor

203.

selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der
 selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der
 selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der
 selbst er - hö - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get, der

C7 F7 B-flat major D major

208

get, er - nie - dri - get wer - den, und
 soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den, und
 soll er - nie - dri - get wer - den, und
 - dri - get, er - nie - dri - get wer - den, und

G minor A7 A7 D minor D minor

212

wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, der
 wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, der
 wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, der
 wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, wersichselbst er - nie - dri - get, der

G(7) C minor F(7) B-flat major

218

soll er - hö -
soll er - hö -
soll er - hö - het, soll er - hö -
soll er - hö -

220

B-flat 7 E-flat major F major F7

- het wer - den, soll er - hö -
- het wer - den, soll er - hö -
- het, er - hö - het wer - den, und wer sich
- het wer - den, und wer sich

224 (G minor)

G minor G7 C minor

- het wer - den.
- het, soll er - hö - het wer - den.
selbst er - nie - driget, der soll er - hö - het wer - den.
selbst er - nie - driget, der soll er - hö - het wer - den.

C minor D7 G minor G major

With a rhyme scheme of AABCC, the poem presents the two opposing qualities of humility/pride, each with 3 lines of text (AAB-BCC). Bach's da capo aria follows this division (lines 1-3 three times with internal repeats; lines 4-6 once with internal repeats). Since the first section is much longer (126 vs. 37 mm.) and repeated (thus almost 15x as long), the quality of humility gets priority, with the flowing vocal line and elaborate obbligato that characterize the first section.

47/2. Soprano Aria (da capo) •Humility is mark of true Christian; God hates pride (47/2)

Organ obbligato in composing score, designated in 1736 or later for solo violin.
Org. obl.
 Solo violin **Cont.:**

D minor (For the significance of D minor, see side note.) iv6 V F# dim.7

Note: For 3 November 1726 (3 weeks later), Bach wrote Cantata 49, "Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen" with obbligato organ.

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions.



D7 G minor C7 F major

The repeated note C in the obbligato appears to reference Christ's example, as referenced in the text. See also cadence in m. 54. See side note for more.



F major

F major

F major

A Section: "characterized by a flowing and (especially in the instrumental part) elaborately figurative melody." (Dürr/Jones, "The Cantatas of J. S. Bach," 567.

18 **Soprano**

Devise (motto) Wer ein wah- rer Christ will hei- ßen,

(A7) D minor

iv6 V

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions. Here it underscores the implied question of the text: "Do you want to be called a true Christian?"

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.

Musical score for measures 23-26. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes.

D minor

Musical score for measures 27-30. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor. The piano part continues with a complex, rhythmic accompaniment.

D minor

D minor

Musical score for measures 31-35. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor. The vocal line has the lyrics: "wer ein wahrer Christ will heißen, muß der". The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment.

D minor

F# dim.7

Musical score for measures 36-40. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor. The vocal line has the lyrics: "Demut sich befehlen, Demut stammt aus". The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment.

D7

G minor

G minor C(7)

F major

Musical score for measures 41-45. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor. The vocal line has the lyrics: "Jesus Reich; wer ein wahrer Christ will". The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment.

F major

F major

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Word painting: Bowing figure for "humility."

46

hei-ßen, muß der De-mut sich be-flei-ßen,

F7 B-flat major F# dim.7 D7

51

De-mut stammt aus Je-su Reich, De-mut

G minor C7 F major C7 F major

54. Repeated Cs in obbligato.

For the significance of F major, see side note.

56

stammt

NBA: B F major

60

aus Je-su Reich.

Ritornello F major

64

F7 B-flat major C7

68

Wer ein wah - rer Christ will - hei - ßen,

F major F major A7 D minor

71 74.

muß der De - mut sich be - flei - ßen, De - mut

D minor

79

stammt

hemiola

D minor D minor

84

aus Je - su Reich, De -

Ritornello

A(7) B-flat major C# dim.7 D minor D minor

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89 *- mut stammt aus Je - su - Reich.*

D minor A7 D minor D minor

94

F# dim.7 D7

99

G minor C7 F major F major

103

F major

107

F major

111

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

115

D minor

D minor

120

In contrast to the first section, "the [short] middle section, which is concerned with pride, is...marked by an obstinate rhythm in the voice, accompanied by double-stops in the obbligato part [when played by a solo violin], which is also rhythmically accentuated, while the continuo takes up the [obbligato] theme of the main section, thereby ensuring the formal unity of the movement. Dürr/Jones 567. By setting themes representing "pride" and "humility" in counterpoint, Bach follows a procedure similar to that in movement 1, where the "humility" theme serves as countersubject to the "pride" theme.

Word painting: Long notes for "Hoffart" (pride/arrogance).

124

D minor

D minor

(Fine)

A minor

Hof - - -

Obbligato theme in continuo. The reversal of position reflects the reversal in the text.

p "Devilish pride"

128

A minor

- - - - - fahrt ist dem

133

F(7)

B-flat major

G minor

G minor

Teu - fel gleich, Hof -

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138

fahrt ist dem Teufel gleich.

G minor E7 Descending circle of fifths for "God hates those..."

143

Gott pflegt alle die zu has-sen, Gott pflegt alle die zu has-sen, die den Stolz...

NBA: so
Operatic patter diction...
A(7) D(7) G(7) C major E7 A minor

148

... nicht fah-ren las-sen; Gott pflegt alle die zu has-sen,

Cross relation for "will not release their pride."
G7 C major C aug. G# dim.7 E major C(7) F major

153

Gott pflegt alle die zu has-sen, die den Stolz nicht fah-

NBA: so
D(7) G major C major F major B-flat major E(7)

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Chromaticism for "those who will not release their pride."

•Humility: Man is but dust, he should humble himself as Christ did (47/3). This is the central movement in a chiasmic form. Typically, such movements explore a paradox, antithesis, or reversal. Here the paradox is that one must humble oneself to be exalted. For more, see note at 47/1. In the Gospel reading, Jesus warns of demotion for those who sought the best place at the banquet.

3. Recitativo

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 12 mm.

The syllabic declamation reinforces the strong language, while the "halo of strings" (reminiscent of the voice of Jesus in the St. Matthew Passion) inflects the text with sad pathos.

Allusion to biblical passages such as Phillipians 2:5-9; perhaps also to the Epistle of the day. See side note.



15

Geh, schäme dich, du stolze Kreatur, tu Buß' und folge Christi Spur, wirf dich vor

Rising inversions...

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

17

Gott im Geiste gläubig nieder! Zu seiner Zeit erhöht er dich auch wieder.

Text painting: One-octave descending phrase for "casting oneself down God; ascending phrase for "God exalting the penitent creature."

F7 B-flat 7 E-flat major F7 E-flat major E-flat major

Allusion to the end of the day's Gospel reading (see 47/1) and biblical passages such as 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you."

4. Aria

47/4. •Prayer: Grant humility that I not forfeit salvation (47/4).

The primary theme (the aria's motto) falls quickly, then rises falteringly a perfect fifth, while the continuo line rises one octave.

1. Vln

Ob. Viol. Cont.

Ritornello derived from vocal line.

E-flat major

Quartet texture (Ob, Vln, Bass, Continuo) in concerto-like writing (the individual timbres and imitative writing emphasizing the conversational character among the lines). It is possible that the 3 instrumental lines represent the 3 persons of the Trinity, as reflected in the Epistle for the day: "one Spirit... one Lord, one God and Father" (Ephesians 4:4-6). The key signature of 3 flats may also symbolize the Trinity. In this regard, compare the structure of "Clavier-Übung III" (see side note for details).

4

Ob in imitation

E-flat 7 B-flat major B-flat major

7

Vln & Ob in alternation with circolatio (bowing) figure.

B-flat major A-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major F major

10

Vln

F7 B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major B-flat 7



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.

Form:
Bach divides the text into 3 parts, following the rhyme scheme: ABAB-CC-DD.

Basso Lines 1-4 (Rhyme scheme ABAB)
Je - su, beu - ge - doch mein Her - ze,

The motto theme is gentle and intimate, descending quickly, then ascending, accompanied by a circulatory figure, a "bowing" gesture related to the text.

(Fine)
E-flat major

16.
A-flat major E-flat major E-flat major E-flat 7 B-flat 7 A-flat major

19.
Je - su, beu - ge - doch mein Her - ze un - ter dei - ne -

The individual lines are highly independent, the unstable harmonic progression and cross relations suggesting the danger of forfeiting salvation, as referenced in the text.

22.
star - ke Hand, daß ich nicht mein Heil ver - scher -

Ob & Vln in alternation.

Bach narrowly avoids parallel 8vas, perhaps to depict not "forfeiting salvation" as referenced in the text.

cross relation

A-flat major B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major

25.
ze, mein Heil ver - scher - ze wie

Word painting: Laughing rhythms in melsimas for "jokingly forfeit" (salvation).

cross relation for "jokingly forfeit salvation LIKE Satan."

Harmonic ambiguity and cross relations for "jokingly forfeit salvation."

A-flat major E-flat major E-flat major B-flat minor

Illusion to biblical passages such as Isaiah 14:12, 15: How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!... But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit" (interpreted historically by Christian theologians as referring to Lucifer, and Luke 10:18: [Jesus] said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven," See also Jude 1:6, 2 Peter 2:4, 9.

28

— der er — ste Höl — len — brand, wie — der er — ste Höl — len — brand.

Text painting: "First firebrand of hell" is cast down into hell with chromatic descending lines.

Ob (1 octave up, see full score).

Ob & Vln tacet

Ritornello

F7 B-flat minor B-flat major

31

B-flat major E-flat major F7

34

Lines 5-6 (Rhyme scheme CC)

Laß mich dei — ne De — mut su — chen und den Hoch —

Ob & Vln in alternation.

B-flat major G7 C minor

Word painting:
Ascending
sequence with
large upward
leaps for "pride/
arrogance"
(literally: "high
opinion of
oneself").

Staccato markings are original.

37

— mut ganz ver — flu — chen, den Hoch — mut ganz,

The poet vows 3 times to curse arrogance, the declarative statements rhetorically emphasized with rests preceding the word "ganz" (entirely).

D7 G minor G7

39II

ganz ver — flu — chen, den Hoch — mut ganz, ganz ver — flu — chen:

Text painting: High notes for "pride/high opinion of oneself" and "ganz" (completely).

C minor D7

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Motto (humility) theme modified

42

laß mich dei - ne - De - mut su - chen und den Hoch -

Vln
Ob

G minor G7 C minor D7 G minor F# dim.7

Word painting: Staccato articulation for "cursed," as if spitting. Perhaps Bach was thinking of Revelation 3:16-17: "Because you are...neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing..." (Slurs as in the NBA.)

44

- mut ganz ver - flu - - chen, verflu - - chen.

Ob Vln (octave up, see full score)

Ob & Vln tacet.

mf Ritornello

D7 G minor G minor

Text painting: Rising line for "pride"; descending line for "entirely curse."

47

G7 C minor C minor C7 (F minor)

50

Ob & Vln in alternation

F minor B-flat 7 E-flat major D7 G minor

Lines 7-8 (Rhyme scheme DD)

53

Gib mir, gib mir, gib mir ei - nen niedern

G minor C7 F minor B-flat 7 E-flat 7

58

Sinn, daß ich dir - ge - fäl - - lig bin;

Ob & Vln in alternation.

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

59

Motto (humility) theme modified

gib mir - - ei - nen nie - dern Sinn, daß ich dir - ge -

Striking cessation of bass line. See side note.

B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major B-flat 7

62

Sequential melisma for "pleasing"

fäl - - - - -

Ob & Vln tacet.

(E-flat major) E-flat major

65

- - lig bin, daß ich dir ge-fäl - - - lig bin!

Vln

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

dal segno

47/5.

5. Choral (Mel: „Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz“)

• Temporal honor given up for eternal reward (47/5): 11th stanza of 14 in the hymn.

Martin Petzoldt suggests that the paired rhythms in the first 2 phrases (SB vs. AT) depict the "temporal honors" vs. "eternal reward" referenced in the text. He also observes the continuous eighth notes in the last two phrases (which reference the merit earned through Christ's death) and the contrary motion between S & B in the last phrase. See "Bach Kommentar" 1:511-12.

Soprano 1. NBA: Ehrn

+Ob I, II, Vln I
+Vln II

Der zeit-li-chen Ehr' will ich gern ent-behr'n, du woll' st mir nur das

Alto
Der zeit - li-chen Ehr' will ich gern ent-behr'n, du woll' st mir nur das

Tenore
Der zeit - li-chen Ehr' will ich gern ent-behr'n, du woll' st mir nur das

+Vla
Basso
Der zeit-li-chen Ehr' will ich gern ent-behr'n, du woll' st mir nur das

Ob. I/II
VI. I/II
Va.
Cont.

G major C minor G minor D major G minor B-flat major (G7)

Ew-ge ge-währ'n, das du er-wor-ben hast durch dei-nen her-ben,

Ew' - ge gewähr'n, das du er-wor-ben hast durch dei-nen her-ben,

Ew' - ge gewähr'n, das du er-wor-ben hast durch dei-nen her-ben,

Ew'ge ge-währ'n, das du er-wor-ben hast durch dei-nen her-ben,

C minor C minor G minor D major G minor E-flat 7 A-flat major

bit-tern Tod. Das bitt' ich dich, mein Herr und Gott!

bit-tern Tod. Das bitt' ich dich, mein Herr und Gott!

bit-tern Tod. Das bitt' ich dich, mein Herr und Gott!

bit-tern Tod. Das bitt' ich dich, mein Herr und Gott!

B-flat 7 E-flat major G7 C minor G minor D(7) G major

S and B move in contrary motion, reminiscent of the the contrary motion of subject and countersubject in the opening movement.