

J.S. Bach - Church

Form: 1. Chorus/fantasia 2. Recit/Chorale (B) 3. Aria (T) 4. Recit/Arioso (B) 5. Duet (sop/alto) 6. Chorale

V. 1 V. 2 (Vv. 3-4) (V. 5) (V. 6) V. 7

The cantata is part of Bach's second annual cycle in Leipzig (the chorale cantata cycle). It is based on the seven stanzas of the 1524 chorale by Martin Luther (1483-1546), at that time the principal hymn of the day. While the hymn has a symmetrical structure centered on the 4th stanza, Bach's cantata centers on 2 movements (nos. 3 & 4), which paraphrase stanzas 3 & 5. Framing this central complex are two movements in "dialogue" format: no. 2 is a text dialogue between recitative and chorale, no. 5 is a musical dialogue between soprano and alto. Nos. 2 & 3 are linked by instrumental references to the first chorale phrase; nos. 4 & 5 by chromaticism; nos. 1 & 5 by references to angels; nos. 2 & 6 by references to recognizing the love of God. (See Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar" 2:100-101.)

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 91

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ

1. (Coro) (Chorale Verse 1) • Incarnation: Praise to Christ for his human birth (91/1).

Rit. Motive b.

Rit. Motive a (in canon 7-fold (see note)) Ob I

Ob II Rit. Motive b.

Ritornello (unrelated to the chorale but furnishes material for vocal motives).

G major

The first movement is in concertante style with choirs of horns, oboes, strings, and voices interacting as equal bodies of sound. See Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 95. For the possible symbolic significance of the ritornello's motives, see note at m. 28.

Figura corta (see side note).

Vln II (up 8va)

Vla (up 8va)

Continuo G major

Corno I, II (up 8va)
Rit. Motive c ("circulatio": see note).

E7

A minor

D7

G major

10II

Structure: Lines 1 & 2 are set in a manner similar to that of 4 & 5 (a chorale line accompanied by imitation employing ritornello motive a is followed by a chorale line accompanied by counterpoint employing ritornello b. In the center of this symmetrical structure is line 3, "the only line in which the lower parts participate in the substance of the chorale." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 96.

13. **A**

Line 1 with ritornello motive a, imitative.

C O R

Ritornello motive a = symbol of praise (here in the shape of a rising "figura circulatio" reminiscent of ritornello motive c) alludes to the angels' praise in the Gospel reading.

Ge - lo - bet seist

Ge - lo - bet, ge - lo -

Ge - lo - bet, ge - lo - bet, ge - lo -

Ge - lo - bet seist du, Je - su

15II G major G major

16.

du, Je - su Christ! Parallel motion in sweet 3rds & 6ths.

- bet, ge - lo - bet seist du, Je - su Christ!

8 - bet, ge - lo - bet seist du, Je - su Christ!

Christ, ge - lo - bet seist du, Je - su Christ!

Vln I

Vln II

Ritornello

Text painting: Unusual harmonic progression to minor for the name of Christ, born in human form, as referenced in the following lines.

C major E7 A minor

20.

18 Vla

Ob II (up 8va)

Ob I A minor Ob III (up 8va)

20II D7

G major

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23 **B** Line 2 with ritornello motive b, chordal; with motive c, freely polyphonic.

26 G major G major

bist, Parallel motion in sweet 3rds.

Ritornello motive a, a sweeping theme initially associated with the word "gelobet" ("to praise," rendered in canon, referencing the "Gloria in excelsis" of the angels as recounted in the day's Gospel reading)

Ritornello motive b (strings), a triadic theme descending step-wise that suggests the descent of the Son of God from paradise to earth

Ritornello motive c (horns), a circulatio figure suggesting heaven's angels, as referenced in the text. See Martin Petzoldt, *Bach Kommentar* 2:102.

Ritornello motive b.

Ritornello motive a.

Ritornello motive c.

G major G7

29 C major C7 A7

31II D minor G7

In the center of this movement's symmetrical structure is chorale line 3, "the only line in which the lower parts participate in the substance of the chorale." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, p. 96. Ending with a chordal repetition of "das ist wahr" ("this is true"), the line is given special treatment and emphasis because it represents a central confession of faith regarding the Incarnation (see Petzoldt, *Bach Kommentar* 2:102–103).

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45. D Line 4 with ritornello motive a (now associated with the word "freuet" ["rejoice"]), imitative.

Ritornello motive a in the shape of a "figura circulatio." Here the reference is to the rejoicing of angels, reflecting the Gospel reading. In movement 5 humans are added to the angel choir.

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48 D major B7

En gel Schar.
et sich der En gel Schar, der Engel
et sich der En gel Schar, der Engel

Ritornello

51 E minor G major G major A7 D major

Schar.
Schar.
Schar.

D major D7 G major

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54

E Line 5 is intoned on the final tonic for 7 mm. in an extended IV-I cadence; accompanying voices freely polyphonic employing ritornello motive b.

Ky - - - ri - - - e
Ky - - - ri - e
Ky - - - R₁R₂R₃R₄R₅R₆R₇R₈R₉R₁₀R₁₁R₁₂R₁₃R₁₄R₁₅R₁₆R₁₇R₁₈R₁₉R₂₀R₂₁R₂₂R₂₃R₂₄R₂₅R₂₆R₂₇R₂₈R₂₉R₃₀R₃₁R₃₂R₃₃R₃₄R₃₅R₃₆R₃₇R₃₈R₃₉R₄₀R₄₁R₄₂R₄₃R₄₄R₄₅R₄₆R₄₇R₄₈R₄₉R₅₀R₅₁R₅₂R₅₃R₅₄R₅₅R₅₆R₅₇R₅₈R₅₉R₆₀R₆₁R₆₂R₆₃R₆₄R₆₅R₆₆R₆₇R₆₈R₆₉R₇₀R₇₁R₇₂R₇₃R₇₄R₇₅R₇₆R₇₇R₇₈R₇₉R₈₀R₈₁R₈₂R₈₃R₈₄R₈₅R₈₆R₈₇R₈₈R₈₉R₉₀R₉₁R₉₂R₉₃R₉₄R₉₅R₉₆R₉₇R₉₈R₉₉R₁₀₀R₁₀₁R₁₀₂R₁₀₃R₁₀₄R₁₀₅R₁₀₆R₁₀₇R₁₀₈R₁₀₉R₁₁₀R₁₁₁R₁₁₂R₁₁₃R₁₁₄R₁₁₅R₁₁₆R₁₁₇R₁₁₈R₁₁₉R₁₂₀R₁₂₁R₁₂₂R₁₂₃R₁₂₄R₁₂₅R₁₂₆R₁₂₇R₁₂₈R₁₂₉R₁₃₀R₁₃₁R₁₃₂R₁₃₃R₁₃₄R₁₃₅R₁₃₆R₁₃₇R₁₃₈R₁₃₉R₁₄₀R₁₄₁R₁₄₂R₁₄₃R₁₄₄R₁₄₅R₁₄₆R₁₄₇R₁₄₈R₁₄₉R₁₅₀R₁₅₁R₁₅₂R₁₅₃R₁₅₄R₁₅₅R₁₅₆R₁₅₇R₁₅₈R₁₅₉R₁₆₀R₁₆₁R₁₆₂R₁₆₃R₁₆₄R₁₆₅R₁₆₆R₁₆₇R₁₆₈R₁₆₉R₁₇₀R₁₇₁R₁₇₂R₁₇₃R₁₇₄R₁₇₅R₁₇₆R₁₇₇R₁₇₈R₁₇₉R₁₈₀R₁₈₁R₁₈₂R₁₈₃R₁₈₄R₁₈₅R₁₈₆R₁₈₇R₁₈₈R₁₈₉R₁₉₀R₁₉₁R₁₉₂R₁₉₃R₁₉₄R₁₉₅R₁₉₆R₁₉₇R₁₉₈R₁₉₉R₂₀₀R₂₀₁R₂₀₂R₂₀₃R₂₀₄R₂₀₅R₂₀₆R₂₀₇R₂₀₈R₂₀₉R₂₁₀R₂₁₁R₂₁₂R₂₁₃R₂₁₄R₂₁₅R₂₁₆R₂₁₇R₂₁₈R₂₁₉R₂₂₀R₂₂₁R₂₂₂R₂₂₃R₂₂₄R₂₂₅R₂₂₆R₂₂₇R₂₂₈R₂₂₉R₂₃₀R₂₃₁R₂₃₂R₂₃₃R₂₃₄R₂₃₅R₂₃₆R₂₃₇R₂₃₈R₂₃₉R₂₄₀R₂₄₁R₂₄₂R₂₄₃R₂₄₄R₂₄₅R₂₄₆R₂₄₇R₂₄₈R₂₄₉R₂₅₀R₂₅₁R₂₅₂R₂₅₃R₂₅₄R₂₅₅R₂₅₆R₂₅₇R₂₅₈R₂₅₉R₂₆₀R₂₆₁R₂₆₂R₂₆₃R₂₆₄R₂₆₅R₂₆₆R₂₆₇R₂₆₈R₂₆₉R₂₇₀R₂₇₁R₂₇₂R₂₇₃R₂₇₄R₂₇₅R₂₇₆R₂₇₇R₂₇₈R₂₇₉R₂₈₀R₂₈₁R₂₈₂R₂₈₃R₂₈₄R₂₈₅R₂₈₆R₂₈₇R₂₈₈R₂₈₉R₂₉₀R₂₉₁R₂₉₂R₂₉₃R₂₉₄R₂₉₅R₂₉₆R₂₉₇R₂₉₈R₂₉₉R₃₀₀R₃₀₁R₃₀₂R₃₀₃R₃₀₄R₃₀₅R₃₀₆R₃₀₇R₃₀₈R₃₀₉R₃₁₀R₃₁₁R₃₁₂R₃₁₃R₃₁₄R₃₁₅R₃₁₆R₃₁₇R₃₁₈R₃₁₉R₃₂₀R₃₂₁R₃₂₂R₃₂₃R₃₂₄R₃₂₅R₃₂₆R₃₂₇R₃₂₈R₃₂₉R₃₃₀R₃₃₁R₃₃₂R₃₃₃R₃₃₄R₃₃₅R₃₃₆R₃₃₇R₃₃₈R₃₃₉R₃₄₀R₃₄₁R₃₄₂R₃₄₃R₃₄₄R₃₄₅R₃₄₆R₃₄₇R₃₄₈R₃₄₉R₃₅₀R₃₅₁R₃₅₂R₃₅₃R₃₅₄R₃₅₅R₃₅₆R₃₅₇R₃₅₈R₃₅₉R₃₆₀R₃₆₁R₃₆₂R₃₆₃R₃₆₄R₃₆₅R₃₆₆R₃₆₇R₃₆₈R₃₆₉R₃₇₀R₃₇₁R₃₇₂R₃₇₃R₃₇₄R₃₇₅R₃₇₆R₃₇₇R₃₇₈R₃₇₉R₃₈₀R₃₈₁R₃₈₂R₃₈₃R₃₈₄R₃₈₅R₃₈₆R₃₈₇R₃₈₈R₃₈₉R₃₉₀R₃₉₁R₃₉₂R₃₉₃R₃₉₄R₃₉₅R₃₉₆R₃₉₇R₃₉₈R₃₉₉R₄₀₀R₄₀₁R₄₀₂R₄₀₃R₄₀₄R₄₀₅R₄₀₆R₄₀₇R₄₀₈R₄₀₉R₄₁₀R₄₁₁R₄₁₂R₄₁₃R₄₁₄R₄₁₅R₄₁₆R₄₁₇R₄₁₈R₄₁₉R₄₂₀R₄₂₁R₄₂₂R₄₂₃R₄₂₄R₄₂₅R₄₂₆R₄₂₇R₄₂₈R₄₂₉R₄₃₀R₄₃₁R₄₃₂R₄₃₃R₄₃₄R₄₃₅R₄₃₆R₄₃₇R₄₃₈R₄₃₉R₄₄₀R₄₄₁R₄₄₂R₄₄₃R₄₄₄R₄₄₅R₄₄₆R₄₄₇R₄₄₈R₄₄₉R₄₅₀R₄₅₁R₄₅₂R₄₅₃R₄₅₄R₄₅₅R₄₅₆R₄₅₇R₄₅₈R₄₅₉R₄₆₀R₄₆₁R₄₆₂R₄₆₃R₄₆₄R₄₆₅R₄₆₆R₄₆₇R₄₆₈R₄₆₉R₄₇₀R₄₇₁R₄₇₂R₄₇₃R₄₇₄R₄₇₅R₄₇₆R₄₇₇R₄₇₈R₄₇₉R₄₈₀R₄₈₁R₄₈₂R₄₈₃R₄₈₄R₄₈₅R₄₈₆R₄₈₇R₄₈₈R₄₈₉R₄₉₀R₄₉₁R₄₉₂R₄₉₃R₄₉₄R₄₉₅R₄₉₆R₄₉₇R₄₉₈R₄₉₉R₅₀₀R₅₀₁R₅₀₂R₅₀₃R₅₀₄R₅₀₅R₅₀₆R₅₀₇R₅₀₈R₅₀₉R₅₁₀R₅₁₁R₅₁₂R₅₁₃R₅₁₄R₅₁₅R₅₁₆R₅₁₇R₅₁₈R₅₁₉R₅₂₀R₅₂₁R₅₂₂R₅₂₃R₅₂₄R₅₂₅R₅₂₆R₅₂₇R₅₂₈R₅₂₉R₅₃₀R₅₃₁R₅₃₂R₅₃₃R₅₃₄R₅₃₅R₅₃₆R₅₃₇R₅₃₈R₅₃₉R₅₄₀R₅₄₁R₅₄₂R₅₄₃R₅₄₄R₅₄₅R₅₄₆R₅₄₇R₅₄₈R₅₄₉R₅₅₀R₅₅₁R₅₅₂R₅₅₃R₅₅₄R₅₅₅R₅₅₆R₅₅₇R₅₅₈R₅₅₉R₅₆₀R₅₆₁R₅₆₂R₅₆₃R₅₆₄R₅₆₅R₅₆₆R₅₆₇R₅₆₈R₅₆₉R₅₇₀R₅₇₁R₅₇₂R₅₇₃R₅₇₄R₅₇₅R₅₇₆R₅₇₇R₅₇₈R₅₇₉R₅₈₀R₅₈₁R₅₈₂R₅₈₃R₅₈₄R₅₈₅R₅₈₆R₅₈₇R₅₈₈R₅₈₉R₅₉₀R₅₉₁R₅₉₂R₅₉₃R₅₉₄R₅₉₅R₅₉₆R₅₉₇R₅₉₈R₅₉₉R₆₀₀R₆₀₁R₆₀₂R₆₀₃R₆₀₄R₆₀₅R₆₀₆R₆₀₇R₆₀₈R₆₀₉R₆₁₀R₆₁₁R₆₁₂R₆₁₃R₆₁₄R₆₁₅R₆₁₆R₆₁₇R₆₁₈R₆₁₉R₆₂₀R₆₂₁R₆₂₂R₆₂₃R₆₂₄R₆₂₅R₆₂₆R₆₂₇R₆₂₈R₆₂₉R₆₃₀R₆₃₁R₆₃₂R₆₃₃R₆₃₄R₆₃₅R₆₃₆R₆₃₇R₆₃₈R₆₃₉R₆₄₀R₆₄₁R₆₄₂R₆₄₃R₆₄₄R₆₄₅R₆₄₆R₆₄₇R₆₄₈R₆₄₉R₆₅₀R₆₅₁R₆₅₂R₆₅₃R₆₅₄R₆₅₅R₆₅₆R₆₅₇R₆₅₈R₆₅₉R₆₆₀R₆₆₁R₆₆₂R₆₆₃R₆₆₄R₆₆₅R₆₆₆R₆₆₇R₆₆₈R₆₆₉R₆₇₀R₆₇₁R₆₇₂R₆₇₃R₆₇₄R₆₇₅R₆₇₆R₆₇₇R₆₇₈R₆₇₉R₆₈₀R₆₈₁R₆₈₂R₆₈₃R₆₈₄R₆₈₅R₆₈₆R₆₈₇R₆₈₈R₆₈₉R₆₉₀R₆₉₁R₆₉₂R₆₉₃R₆₉₄R₆₉₅R₆₉₆R₆₉₇R₆₉₈R₆₉₉R₇₀₀R₇₀₁R₇₀₂R₇₀₃R₇₀₄R₇₀₅R₇₀₆R₇₀₇R₇₀₈R₇₀₉R₇₁₀R₇₁₁R₇₁₂R₇₁₃R₇₁₄R₇₁₅R₇₁₆R₇₁₇R₇₁₈R₇₁₉R₇₂₀R₇₂₁R₇₂₂R₇₂₃R₇₂₄R₇₂₅R₇₂₆R₇₂₇R₇₂₈R₇₂₉R₇₃₀R₇₃₁R₇₃₂R₇₃₃R₇₃₄R₇₃₅R₇₃₆R₇₃₇R₇₃₈R₇₃₉R₇₄₀R₇₄₁R₇₄₂R₇₄₃R₇₄₄R₇₄₅R₇₄₆R₇₄₇R₇₄₈R₇₄₉R₇₅₀R₇₅₁R₇₅₂R₇₅₃R₇₅₄R₇₅₅R₇₅₆R₇₅₇R₇₅₈R₇₅₉R₇₆₀R₇₆₁R₇₆₂R₇₆₃R₇₆₄R₇₆₅R₇₆₆R₇₆₇R₇₆₈R₇₆₉R₇₇₀R₇₇₁R₇₇₂R₇₇₃R₇₇₄R₇₇₅R₇₇₆R₇₇₇R₇₇₈R₇₇₉R₇₈₀R₇₈₁R₇₈₂R₇₈₃R₇₈₄R₇₈₅R₇₈₆R₇₈₇R₇₈₈R₇₈₉R₇₉₀R₇₉₁R₇₉₂R₇₉₃R₇₉₄R₇₉₅R₇₉₆R₇₉₇R₇₉₈R₇₉₉R₈₀₀R₈₀₁R₈₀₂R₈₀₃R₈₀₄R₈₀₅R₈₀₆R₈₀₇R₈₀₈R₈₀₉R₈₁₀R₈₁₁R₈₁₂R₈₁₃R₈₁₄R₈₁₅R₈₁₆R₈₁₇R₈₁₈R₈₁₉R₈₂₀R₈₂₁R₈₂₂R₈₂₃R₈₂₄R₈₂₅R₈₂₆R₈₂₇R₈₂₈R₈₂₉R₈₃₀R₈₃₁R₈₃₂R₈₃₃R₈₃₄R₈₃₅R₈₃₆R₈₃₇R₈₃₈R₈₃₉R₈₄₀R₈₄₁R₈₄₂R₈₄₃R₈₄₄R₈₄₅R₈₄₆R₈₄₇R₈₄₈R₈₄₉R₈₅₀R₈₅₁R₈₅₂R₈₅₃R₈₅₄R₈₅₅R₈₅₆R₈₅₇R₈₅₈R₈₅₉R₈₆₀R₈₆₁R₈₆₂R₈₆₃R₈₆₄R₈₆₅R₈₆₆R₈₆₇R₈₆₈R₈₆₉R₈₇₀R₈₇₁R₈₇₂R₈₇₃R₈₇₄R₈₇₅R₈₇₆R₈₇₇R₈₇₈R₈₇₉R₈₈₀R₈₈₁R₈₈₂R₈₈₃R₈₈₄R₈₈₅R₈₈₆R₈₈₇R₈₈₈R₈₈₉R₈₉₀R₈₉₁R₈₉₂R₈₉₃R₈₉₄R₈₉₅R₈₉₆R₈₉₇R₈₉₈R₈₉₉R₉₀₀R₉₀₁R₉₀₂R₉₀₃R₉₀₄R₉₀₅R₉₀₆R₉₀₇R₉₀₈R₉₀₉R₉₁₀R₉₁₁R₉₁₂R₉₁₃R₉₁₄R₉₁₅R₉₁₆R₉₁₇R₉₁₈R₉₁₉R₉₂₀R₉₂₁R₉₂₂R₉₂₃R₉₂₄R₉₂₅R₉₂₆R₉₂₇R₉₂₈R₉₂₉R₉₃₀R₉₃₁R₉₃₂R₉₃₃R₉₃₄R₉₃₅R₉₃₆R₉₃₇R₉₃₈R₉₃₉R₉₄₀R₉₄₁R₉₄₂R₉₄₃R₉₄₄R₉₄₅R₉₄₆R₉₄₇R₉₄₈R₉₄₉R₉₅₀R₉₅₁R₉₅₂R₉₅₃R₉₅₄R₉₅₅R₉₅₆R₉₅₇R₉₅₈R₉₅₉R₉₆₀R₉₆₁R₉₆₂R₉₆₃R₉₆₄R₉₆₅R₉₆₆R₉₆₇R₉₆₈R₉₆₉R₉₇₀R₉₇₁R₉₇₂R₉₇₃R₉₇₄R₉₇₅R₉₇₆R₉₇₇R₉₇₈R₉₇₉R₉₈₀R₉₈₁R₉₈₂R₉₈₃R₉₈₄R₉₈₅R₉₈₆R₉₈₇R₉₈₈R₉₈₉R₉₉₀R₉₉₁R₉₉₂R₉₉₃R₉₉₄R₉₉₅R₉₉₆R₉₉₇R₉₉₈R₉₉₉R₉₉₉

56II G7 C major C major

Chordal repetition of the text is reminiscent of the chordal codetta at the end of line 3.

Ob I Ritornello motive a. Ob II Ob III Vln I

C minor G major Excursion to minor is probably occasioned by the text: "Lord have mercy."

leis!
leis!
leis!

Vln II (up 8va) Vla (up 8va) Continuo Ritornello

G major V7

62

E7

A minor

D7

64II

G major

67

Secco

G major

G major

(Verse 2 of the chorale, minus the closing "Kyrie," is inserted into a recitative.)
• Incarnation: Eternal good clothed in flesh & blood (91/2).

2. Recitativo und Choral

Soprano

Text painting: Ascending line
for "radiance of highest glory."

Der Glanz der höchsten Herrlichkeit, das Ebenbild von Got tes

Hybrid movement: a recitative
is used to trope a chorale.

E minor Allusion to or paraphrase of Hebrews 1:3: "[Christ] reflects the glory of God (Luther 1545: der Glanz seiner Herrlichkeit) and bears the very stamp of his nature (Luther 1545: das Ebenbild seines Wesens), upholding the universe by his word of power..."

3

We - sen, hat in be - stimm - ter Zeit sich ei - nen Wohnplatz aus - er -

The Trinitarian understanding of
the Incarnation is encapsulated in
the Nicene Creed (see note).

5 Choral

Chorale Stanza 2 (phrase 1); melodic line 1 three times in diminution
in the continuo (probably alluding to the Trinity).

B7

Recit.

D# dim.7

lesen. Des ew' - gen Va - ters

ei - nig Kind,

das ew' - ge Licht von Licht ge -

Right hand is editorial realization.

NBA: einigs

Text painting: Asending line
for "the eternal light born of
light" (see note on the Nicene
Creed).

E minor G major

G7 A minor

A minor

A7

See full score for the correct octave.

The second phrase is given greater emphasis with embellishment and longer vocal pause at the cadence.

Choral Chorale Stanza 2 (phrase 2, ornamented); melodic line 1 three times in diminution in the continuo.

NBA: itzt boren, jetzt man in der Krippe find't.

Right hand is editorial realization.

D minor G7 C major G major G7 C major E major

Choral Chorale Stanza 2 (phrase 3); melodic line 1 three times in diminution in the bass.

an, was hier der Lie_be Kraft ge_tan. In un_ser ar_mes Fleisch und Blut_

Right hand is editorial realization.

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

Recit.

Choral Chorale Stanza 2 (phrase 4); melodic line 1 three times in diminution in the bass.

(und war denn dieses nicht ver.flucht, verdammt, ver_loрен?) ver_klei_det sich das

Chromaticism for "was this poor flesh and blood not cursed, condemned, and lost?"

Right hand is editorial realization.

Allusion to biblical passages such as Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13 (see side note).

D# dim.7 E7 C# dim.7 A7 D major G major

Descending chromatic bass line...

Recit.

ew - - - - - ge Gut, so wie es ja zum Se_gen aus_er_ko_ren.

NBA: wird

G major D7 D# dim.7 E minor E minor

The text compares God's boundlessness with the narrow manger.

24

8 - gen Krip-pe_ sein.

f Ritornello

E minor E minor E7 A major F $\#$ (7)

29

B
Erscheinet uns dies

B major B7 E minor E minor E7

39

8 Licht, so wird hin.fü.ro Gott uns nicht als die.ses Lichtes Kinder has - sen.

Ritornello

C major D7 G major G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 91

44

Erscheinet uns dies ew' ge Licht,

The repeated 3-note figure is reminiscent of the repeated notes that begin 3 phrases of the underlying chorale.

G7 C major A7 D minor B-flat major

49

— so wird hinfü ro Gott uns nicht als die ses Lich tes Kin — der has —

A minor F7 B-flat major A7 D minor

53

sen.

Ritornello

D minor D7 G minor D minor

58

Gott, dem der Er den kreis zu klein,

D minor D minor G7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 91

63

Gott, dem der Erdenkreis zu klein,
den we der Welt noch Himmel fas sen,

Ritornello

C major A minor D7 E7 A minor E major

68

Gott, dem der Erdenkreis zu klein,

A minor A minor A7

73

den we der Welt noch Himmel fas sen,

D minor B-flat major E7 A minor

77

will in der en gen Krippe sein.

Ritornello

A minor A7 D minor

82

A minor A minor A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 91

Bass 4. Recitativo (Based on Chorale Verse 5) •Christmas: Prepare to receive Creator as thy guest! (91/4).

Chromatic Saturation
in the vocal part in
10 mm.

Bass is often the
voice of authority.
Here he exhorts
Christendom
(mentioned again
in the closing
movement) to
prepare itself to
receive the
Creator.

Bass 4. Recitativo (Based on Chorale Verse 5) •Christmas: Prepare to receive Creator as thy guest! (91/4).

Chromatic Saturation in the vocal part in 10 mm.

Bass is often the voice of authority. Here he exhorts Christendom (mentioned again in the closing movement) to prepare itself to receive the Creator.

Annotations:

- Bass Staff:** Chromatic saturation points A, D, F#, C, and B.
- Alto Staff:** Dynamic marking 'p' and 'Strings'.
- Tenor Staff:** Red bracket under bass staff with 'D major' written above it.
- Soprano Staff:** Red annotations for notes D#, G, E, D7, C#, A#, and G major.
- Bass Staff (Measures 3-5):** Red annotations for (B7), E minor, F#7, B minor, and G major.
- Alto Staff (Measure 5):** Red annotations for A major and D major.
- Tenor Staff (Measure 5):** Red annotations for D7 and G# dim.7. Text painting: Arioso with long ascending chromatic scale for "lead you out of this vale of tears to his throne."
- Soprano Staff (Measure 5):** Red annotations for G# dim.7 and 'NBA: kommt'.
- Bass Staff (Measure 8):** Red annotation for E7.
- Alto Staff (Measure 8):** Red annotations for Adagio, 'Tortured chromaticism to depict being led out of the "Jammertal."', and 'P Vla has parallel 5ths.'
- Tenor Staff (Measure 8):** Red annotations for A minor, A-flat major, E dim.7, F minor, C7, F minor, and A half dim.7.
- Soprano Staff (Measure 8):** Red annotation for F.
- Bass Staff (Measure 10):** Red annotations for 'Parallel 5ths between singer & viola.' and 'Harmonic clashes'.
- Alto Staff (Measure 10):** Red annotations for 'Ascending chromatic fourth in continuo (see side note and no. 5 at mm. 37–40.)'.
- Tenor Staff (Measure 10):** Red annotations for B-flat dim.7, C7, N6, (B dim.7), F# dim.7, C minor, G7, A-flat aug. major 7, C7, F minor, B dim.7, and C major.
- Soprano Staff (Measure 10):** Red annotation for C major. For the significance of C, see side note.

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.

This is the longest movement in the cantata and explores the key aspect of the Incarnation.

The repeated 3-note figure (here in imperial French dotted style) is reminiscent of the repeated notes that begin 3 phrases of the underlying chorale.

5. Aria (Duetto)

(Based on Chorale Verse 6)

Unison violins

E minor

G7

C major

E7 A minor

311

Sopr

The text alludes to 2 Corinthians 8:9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." (Also Ephesians 2:7, 3:16, Colossians 1:27, 2:2.) The contrast implicit in the Incarnation give rise to musical differentiation:
 -Majestic, processional, dotted figures (unison violins over a marching bass) depict the glory of heaven—which Christ left and to which he will bring believers, as referenced in the text.
 -Sinuous vocal lines, with dissonant suspensions or chromatic ascent depict the poor, arduous human condition as described in the text (unrelated to ritornello). For an alternate explanation by Alfred Dürr, see side note.

First half of A Section (text lines 1–3).

Alt



A minor

E minor (B7) E minor

E minor

E minor

6

mut, so Gott auf sich nimmt,

die Ar mut,
Dissonant suspension for "poverty."

— so Gott auf sich nimmt,

die Ar —

Ritornello

E minor

E minor

9

— so Gott auf sich nimmt, hat uns ein e-wig

mut, so Gott auf sich nimmt, hat uns ein e-wig

Majestic processional figure...

F# major

B minor

B minor

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Word painting: Long melismas for "eternal."

11
Word painting: Long melismas for "Sturm".

Heil, ein e - - - - - wig
Heil, ein e - - - - - wig Heil

B minor

13

NBA: an (each time)

16

D7 G major

B7 E minor

E#7 B minor

18

Second half of A Section (text lines 1–3).

Die Ar - - - - mut,

die Ar -

Die Armut

die Ar mut

Majestic processional figure continues...

B minor

B minor

B7 E major

major

A7

D7

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21

mut , die Ar mut , so Gott auf sich
die Ar mut , die Ar mut , so Gott auf sich

G7 E7 A minor A minor

24

nimmt, die Ar mut , so Gott auf sich
Dissonant suspension for "poverty."
nimmt, die Ar mut , so Gott auf sich

Ritornello Majestic processional figure...
A minor B7 E minor

27

nimmt, hat uns ein e - wig Heil,
nimmt, hat uns ein e - wig Heil,

Sweet parallel 3rds & 6ths for "eternal salvation."
E minor B7 A minor

29

wig Heil bestimmt, den
wig Heil bestimmt, den

Word painting: Long melismas for "eternal."
A minor B(7) E minor

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31

Ü - berfluss von Himmels Schät - zen.

Ritornello Majestic processional figure...

E minor E minor

33II

E minor G7 C major E7 A minor B7 E minor E minor

B A syncopated vocal line, which reinforces the majestic dotted processional figure of the instruments, provides counterpoint to a rising chromatic vocal line.

36

Sein menschlich We sen,

Syncopated vocal line reinforces the majestic dotted processional figure.

First half of B Section (text lines 4–6): The ascending chromatic 4th appears in each line (successively up a fifth, all in sharp keys): Am: m. 36; Em: m. 39, Bm: m. 41; F#m: m. 44.

Sein mensch lich We sen ma chet

Ascending chromatic fourth depicts arduous human condition (see side note).

Majestic processional figure...

E minor A minor D7 G major E7 A minor

38H

Ascending chromatic fourth.

sein menschlich Wesen, sein menschlich We sen ma chet

euch den Engels-Herr - lichkei ten

B7 E minor A7 D major

D major B7 E minor A7 D major

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41

euch, sein menschlich We - sen ma - chet
gleich, den En - gels-Herrlich - kei - ten gleich, euch

Unison violins: Ascending chromatic fourth.

F# major B minor E7 A major F# major B minor

43II

euch den En - gels - Herr. lich. kei - ten gleich, euch zu der
zu der En - gel Chor, — euch zu der En - gel

Ascending chromatic fourth.

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

46

En - gel Chor, zu der En - gel Chor zu set -
Chor, zu der En - gel Chor zu set -

E7 A major E7

48II

- zen, euch zu der EngelChor zu set - zen.
- zen, zu der En - gel Chor zu set - zen. Ritornello Majestic processional figure

C#7 F# minor F# minor

Eric Chafe notes that at the juncture in the middle of Section B there is a tonal confrontation between F# minor and G minor, the ancient "mi contra fa" distinction. See Eric Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 176.

Second half of B Section (text lines 4–6): The ascending chromatic 4th appears in each line (successively up a fifth, in flat keys):
Cm: m. 58; Gm: m. 61, Dm: m. 63; Am: m. 66.

C

Dissonant suspension for "human/mortal nature."

F# minor A7 D major D major D7 G minor

53II

ma chet euch den En

ma chet euch den

Ritornello

G minor G minor

Sweet parallel 6ths for "like the glory of the angels." "Mezzo circulo" (see note at no. 1).

56

gels Herr lich kei ten gleich;

En gels-Herrlich kei ten gleich;

Ritornello Majestic processional figure

G7 C minor G7 C minor

Ascending chromatic fourth.

58 D

sein mensch lich We sen

sein menschlich We

C minor C minor F7 B-flat major G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 91

60

ma - chet euch, sein menschlich We - sen, sein mensch - lich

C minor F major D7 G minor

Ascending chromatic fourth.

62

sen ma - chet euch den En -

We - sen ma - chet euch, sein menschlich We -

F major D major G minor C major A major D minor

64

gels-Herrlich - kei - ten gleich, euch zu der_ En -

- - - - - sen ma - chet euch den En -

Unison violins: Ascending chromatic fourth.

G7 C major A major D minor G major E(7)

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66

"Figura circulatio" and "circulo mezzo" used for angels (see note at no. 1).

A minor D7 G major E7 A minor

68

Chor, zu der En - gel Chor zu set - - - -
En - - - - gel Chor, zu der En - - - - gel Chor zu set - -

G(7) C major

70

zen, zu der En - gel Chor zu set - zen.
zen, euch zu der En - gel Chor zu set - zen.

E7 A minor da capo

6. Choral

(Verse 7) (See also 64/2, 248/28.)

- Christmas: Let all praise God for this gift of love! (91/6)

Text painting:
Animated voice
leading for "let all
Christendom
rejoice over this
and thank him
throughout
eternity" (last 6
measures).

Corno I plays the "figura circulatio," associated with heaven's angels, referenced earlier (see no. 1 with note and no. 5).