ISSN 2633-9951

Discussing Bach

Issue 2 (July 2021)

Bach and Jesus

Dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague
Don O. Franklin (1938–2021) and his beloved wife Joan (1938–2021)

Authorised Transcript
with Illustrations

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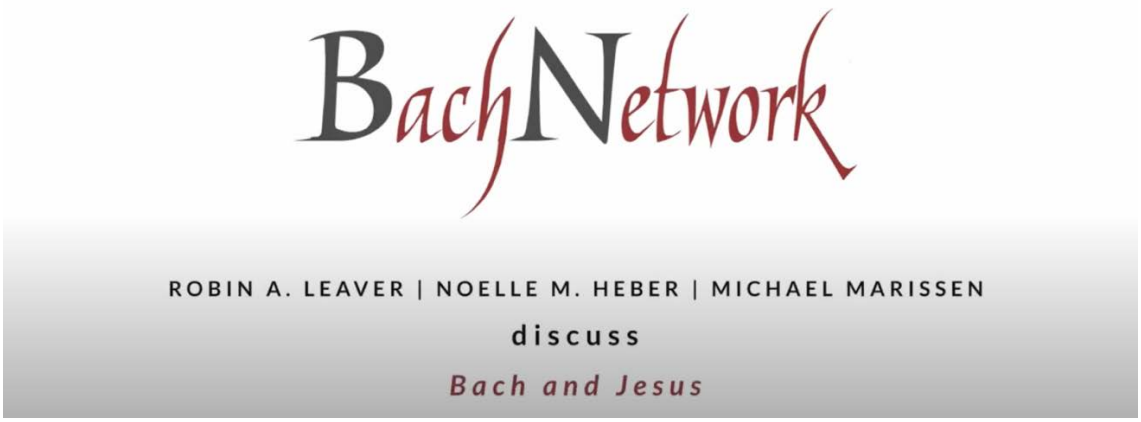
Bach and Jesus

Authorised transcript* of a live video discussion with Robin A. Leaver (RAL), Noelle M. Heber (NMH), and Michael Marissen (MM)

Chaired by Ruth Tatlow (RT). Recorded on Friday 11 June 2021



* The following transcript has been edited and expanded for clarity and will at times differ from the spoken live discussion.

RT Welcome to *Discussing Bach*, the multi-media publication produced by Bach Network.

My name is Ruth Tatlow, and I am co-editor with Barbara Reul of this issue 'Bach and Jesus'. I am delighted to welcome Robin Leaver, Noelle Heber, and Michael Marissen as our three experts, who over the next thirty minutes or so will be sharing new research ideas and opening up this deep and complex topic for us. Without further ado I will hand over to Robin to start the ideas rolling with a presentation on 'Emblematic Jesus'.

RAL Receiving Communion during Bach's time was not as frequent as it is now. For example, the records of the Thomas Church in Leipzig reveal that Bach usually received Communion only two or three times each year, sometimes only once.

Participation in the Lord's Supper was regarded as a solemn obligation that had to be taken very seriously. In particular, one had to be prepared for this encounter with Jesus. Each individual had to commit to a succession of personal daily prayers for at least a week before receiving Communion, and then during the following week to meditate on the significance of having received Communion. Then on the day before Communion, after Saturday Vespers, it was necessary to make individual confession to one of the clergy (the *Beicht-Vater*; the father confessor) privately in a separate confessional (a *Beichtstuhl*), within the church.

This Lutheran practice of individual, private Confession – which was discontinued by the nineteenth century – was supported by devotional handbooks for Confession and Communion – small, duodecimo volumes that could easily fit into a man's pocket or a woman's handbag. The books were often written by parish clergy and published by local printers. But a few had much wider circulation, being reprinted numerous times by different printer/publishers, encompassing a wide geographical area and over a long period of time. One of the most significant was the Confession/Communion prayer book by Johann Rittmeyer. The title: *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl der Kinder Gottes auf Erden* (Heavenly Joyful Supper for the Children of God on Earth).[1] (Image 1)

Rittmeyer was a pastor and professor in Helmstedt, and his devotional book, first published in 1683, became the most popular handbook of practical devotion for Confession and Communion over the next hundred years or so in Lutheran Germany. Between 1683 and 1779 almost fifty different extant editions were published. But it's likely that there were other editions of this popular book that have subsequently disappeared or are in private hands and therefore are unrecorded.


Himmlisches
Freuden-Mahl
der Kinder Gottes auff Erden.
Oder
Geistreiche Gebete/
So vor/bey und nach der
Beicht und heiligem Abend-
mahl kräfftig zu gebrauchen;
Nebenst
Heilsamen Unterricht/
Wie wir uns dabey zu verhalten;
Sammt einem Sünden-Register/
darnach wir uns täglich zu prüfen;
Und hundert
Christliche Lebens-Regeln
Mit einem Anhange
von Morgen- und Abend-Gebet/
auff alle Tage und absonderlichen
Kirchen-Gebeten/
Wie auch einiger
Geistreichen Gesänge und Lieder
Mit Königl. und Churf. Sächs. auch
Chur- und Hoch-Fürtl. Braunsch. Lüneb.
PRIVILEGIIS.
Lüneburg/
Gedruckt und verlegt durch Cornelius
Johann Stern/1730.

Image 1: Title page: *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl* (Lüneburg: Stern, 1730). Image Yo Tomita


Jesus klopffet an sein Hertz.

Image 2: First emblem from the same source

The distinctive feature of Rittmeyer's Confession / Communion prayer book is the sequence of ten emblematic copper engravings, which illustrate the presence of Jesus in the life of the individual – Jesus in the heart. (Image 2).

Image 3: Title page: *Cor Jesu amanti sacrum* (ca. 1600). Image © Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels

Image 4: Example of six-line verse in Latin from the same source

What is intriguing about these images is that they are adaptations of a sequence of eighteen engravings by Anton Wierix the Younger, a member of the distinguished family of Flemish artists, that were published around 1600 under the title *Cor Jesu amanti sacrum* (The Heart Devoted to the Loving Jesus).[2] The sequence of images was either prepared for or commissioned by the Catholic Jesuits. On the title page that you see there (Image 3), the person on the right is a Jesuit priest.[3] Each emblem has no heading, but underneath there is a six-line verse in Latin describing the image (Image 4). During the seventeenth century the images were reprinted, re-engraved many, many times, arranged in different sequences, with different Latin texts and were used extensively in the various missionary endeavours of the Jesuits.

Rittmeyer, the Lutheran, takes just ten of these emblems and reinterprets them for the Lutheran practice of Confession and Communion, and inserts them into his devotional handbook in appropriate places. He also gives each emblem a heading, a relevant biblical verse above the image, and an explanatory four-line verse below it – all in German, not in Latin. And so, we go through the sequence:

First, Jesus knocks at the heart. (Image 5)
Then, Jesus searches throughout the heart – hence the lamp. (Image 6)
Then, Jesus purifies the heart. (Image 7)
Then, Jesus sings in the heart. (Image 8)
Jesus feeds the heart. (Image 9)

Image 5

Image 6

Image 7

Image 8

Image 9

Images 5–14 are from *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl* (Lüneburg: Stern, 1730). Images Robin A. Leaver

Image 10

Image 11

Image 12

Image 13

Image 14

Jesus is the source of all grace. (Image 10)
Jesus brings the cross into the heart. (Image 11)
Jesus intercedes on our behalf. (Image 12)
And then Jesus rules inside the heart. (Image 13)
And then, finally, quite a staggering one:
Jesus plays in the heart – plays music, that is. (Image 14)

Now, there are at least three Leipzig connections. First, there is the *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten* of 1694, a handbook for Confession and Communion that has a set of similar 'Jesus in the Heart' engravings.[4] This is significant because the book is a primary source for the details of the Leipzig liturgy. The editor, Gottlob Friedrich Seligmann, was the archdeacon of the Thomas Church at the time and later professor of theology. (Images 15 and 16)


Leipziger
Kirchen-Andachten/
Darinnen
Der Erste Theil
Das Gebetbuch/
Oder
Die Ordnung des gantzen öffentlichen Gottes-Dienstes durchs gantze Jahr/
Der Ander Theil
Das Gesangbuch/
Leipzig/ verlegts Caspar Würdig.

Image 15: Title page: *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten* (Leipzig: Würdig, 1694). Image Jeffrey S. Sposato


Register des ersten Theils.
Verzeichnüß der Kupffer/
Jesus feucht das Hertz

Image 16: List of engravings, *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten* (Leipzig: Würdig, 1694). Image Jeffrey S. Sposato

Second, Seligmann also produced another devotional book: *Introduction to House and Heart Devotion* (*Anleitung zur Hauß- und Hertzens-Andacht*), published by the same Leipzig publisher, in the same year, 1694 – clearly the *'Hauß-Andachten'* equivalent of the *'Kirchen-Andachten'*.[5] (Images 17 and 18) This volume also has a similar sequence of 'Jesus in the Heart' engravings that were clearly done by the same anonymous Leipzig engraver, who was responsible for the images in the *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten*.

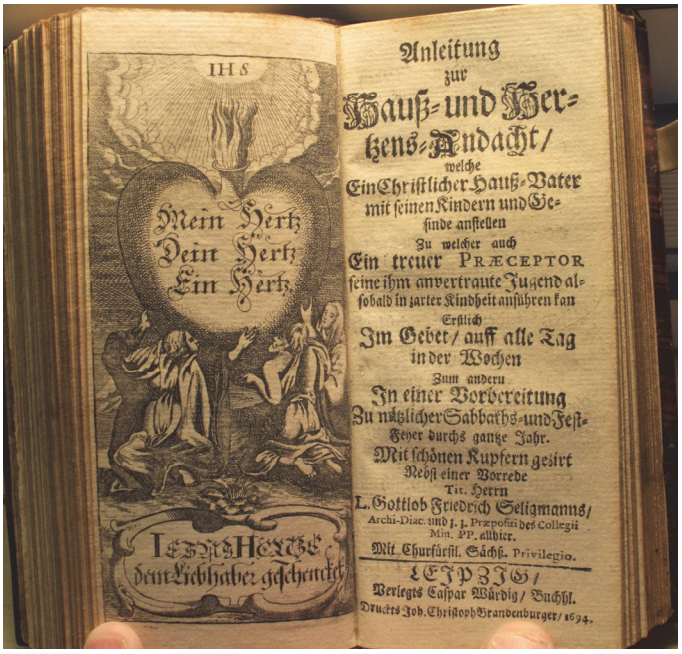


Image 17: Title page: *Anleitung zur Hauß- und Hertzens-Andacht* (Leipzig: Würdig, 1694). Image Jeffrey S. Sposato

Image 18: First engraving from the same source

Third, when the Lüneburg publisher Stern took over publishing the Rittmeyer volume in the early 1720s, the images were re-engraved by the Brühls of Leipzig. (Image 19)

Image 19: Brühl engravers, Leipzig. *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl* (Lüneburg: Stern, 1730). Image Robin A. Leaver

So, there is a strong possibility that Bach was aware of such images, especially as these heart emblems gave rise to other engravings, such as the one in an edition of Heinrich Müller's *Himmlischer Liebes-Kuss*,[6] a book that we know Bach owned.

Now, given the Lutheran practice of the time, Bach would have used such a devotional handbook in connection with his preparation for making confession to his *Beicht-Vater* and before and after his participation in Communion. Whether he owned Rittmeyer's very popular *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl* remains an open

question. But what is clear is that these various series of emblematic images of 'Jesus in the Heart' are in a sense the visual representation of the verbal imagery found in the libretti of Bach's cantatas. (Images 20 and 21)

Image 20: Engraving from Heinrich Müller's *Himmlischer Liebes-Kuss* (Nuremberg: Endter, 1722). Image Robin A. Leaver

Image 21: First emblem: *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl* (Lüneburg: Stern, 1730)

RT Thank you so much, Robin. That's absolutely gripping and marvellous to have those pictures that we can look at, at leisure, and have to study. I'm going to hand over now to Michael and Noelle for some immediate reactions to this:

MM Wonderful stuff. Yeah, it put me very much in mind, as I'm sure it does you too, of these wonderful places like in the *Matthew Passion* where the bass sings 'Mache dich, mein Herze, rein' ('Make my heart pure') so that Jesus can be buried in there. And, also in the closing chorus of the *Mark Passion*, the same kind of idea is there. So that, what it means for Jesus to be 'buried in the heart' then is, I guess, to take in the physical Jesus in the consecrated bread and wine of Communion, right? Isn't that what the idea of Jesus living in the heart is, part of the metaphor for that? Is that right, Robin?

RAL Yeah! Absolutely, yeah, yeah.

NMH Yeah, thank you so much! This was fascinating, and I appreciate you bringing in visual art to join the conversation about theological aspects related to Bach and his context, which we usually talk about with words and we hear a lot of music about it as well. So, that's fascinating. I don't think I've seen so many pictures of 'Jesus and heart' brought together before. In images of Jesus I've seen so much of Jesus and his crucifixion or resurrection. But this is really interesting because the language is familiar, but I've never encountered so many pictures like that. So, thank you.

RAL It also shows how complicated life was – at all different levels. We tend to think 'Oh yeah, the cantatas, they fit in here, in the *Haupt-Gottesdienst* on Sunday mornings', and that's it. No. Their way of life was very complicated and very regimented in many respects.

MM What I also like is how informal some of them are, like the idea that Jesus goes in there and sweeps out the place and so on, you know, when we tend to think of

Jesus as being this very serious kind of guy. But here he is, like, cleaning your apartment for you. Very nice!

RAL The sequence of the Rittmeyer is very carefully done. You start with the key image: Jesus is knocking on the door. Nothing is going to happen until you open the door, and it shows you what Jesus will do once the door is open.

RT Lovely. Well, we're going to come back at the end to some of that, to one of these emblems. But now, let's move on to hear what Noelle has to say about 'Jesus as Treasure'.

NMH Thank you. So, as we have already seen, in Bach's liturgical settings, Jesus was clearly more than a historical figure. Throughout the texts of Bach's church music, one finds an abundance of symbolic names for Jesus, which point to the importance of his persona on a theological level. These poetic descriptors are then, in turn, elaborated by Luther and by other Lutheran theologians from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Jesus, of course, is a central component in the Lutheran understanding of salvation, which is believed to be attained through Christ alone – meaning that Jesus is the one and only pathway to God, salvation, and eternal life.

Therefore, it is no wonder that language could hardly do justice to the spiritual significance of Jesus for Lutheran believers. Bach's cantatas are simply overflowing with diverse descriptors for Jesus – for example, in the text of the fourth part of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, the name Jesus appears seventeen times in the seven short movements, and he is portrayed with some twenty different descriptive words.

A short excerpt from the second recitative reads, in an English translation, as follows:

> Jesus, my joy and gladness,
> My hope, treasure, and portion,
> My Redemption, ornament, and Salvation,
> Shepherd and King, Light and Sun, …[7]

> Jesu, meine Freud und Wonne,
> Meine Hoffnung, Schatz und Teil,
> Mein Erlösung, Schmuck und Heil,
> Hirt und König, Licht und Sonne, …

Of these many possibilities I would like to briefly highlight the idea of Jesus as 'treasure'.[8] The word treasure or in German 'Schatz' appears some twenty-six times in Bach's sacred music and of these fifteen refer specifically to Jesus. For example, in Bach's Christmas cantata, *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, BWV 197a, stanza four reads of the divine infant, 'O You delightful treasure! Rise out of Your crib

[literally: these mangers]; Take place [literally: take a seat] instead on my lips and in my heart.' ('O! du angenehmer Schatz, Hebe dich aus denen Krippen, Nimm dafür auf meinen Lippen und in meinem Herzen Platz').[9] The meaning of 'Jesus as treasure' in this context is elaborated in theological books that were present in Bach's own personal library. Johann Olearius in his Bible commentary describes the infant Jesus as 'the treasure above all treasures' ('den Schatz über alle Schätze') and the highest good.[10] Heinrich Müller likewise stated, 'For among all the treasures of God there is no more precious and costly gift than the treasure of his grace [that is] found in Christ' ('Fürwar unter allen Schätzen Gottes ist keine theurer und köstlicher Gabe / als der Schatz seiner Gnaden in Christo auffgethan').[11]

This and other Christmas cantatas allude to 2 Corinthians 8:9, which states that Christ became poor so that believers through his poverty might become rich.[12] In contemporary Bible commentaries on this verse and in other passages, baby Jesus is often described as a 'treasure', and this contrasts with the state of poverty into which he entered the world. August Pfeiffer, for example, described Jesus as a 'dear child lying so miserably like a pearl on [a] dunghill' ('...das liebe Kind so elend / gleichsam wie eine Perle auf den Misthauffen / liegt...').[13] On 2 Corinthians 8:9, the Calov Bible comments that in Jesus 'are hidden all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge … indeed the whole fullness of the deity' ('weil in ihm alle Schätze der Weißheit und Erkäntniß Gottes verborgen sind ... und die gantze Fülle der Gottheit').[14] And the commentary by Olearius on the same verse explains that 'the treasure is called grace, but in particular: the poverty of the humiliated Saviour N.B. Phil. 2. whereby he has acquired everything for us and encourages us to follow him with good works Matth. 11.' ('der Schatz heis[s]t ins gemein Gnade / insonderheit aber die Armuth deß erniedrigten Heylandes N.B. Phil. 2 wodurch Er uns alles erworben und zur gutthätigen Nachfolge ermuntert. Matth. 11.').[15]

In conclusion, Jesus was described as a treasure because the historical events of his birth, crucifixion, and resurrection would have made salvation possible. But he was also considered a treasure in the present moment for all those who would receive him into their hearts. The symbol of Jesus as treasure in Bach's church compositions – and we may assume for Bach himself – therefore carried a deeply personal and spiritual importance for Lutheran believers.[16]

RT Thank you, Noelle. That's wonderful; it follows on beautifully from what Robin was saying. Robin and Michael, any responses?

MM Yeah. I'm kind of wondering, do any of those Lutheran theologians or someone talk about the fact that, because people are permitted as it were to use the informal 'Du' form with God, that the German expression 'mein Schatz' is also a kind of very informal thing, like, what you would use, you know, for 'my girlfriend' or 'my boyfriend', very, very informal. Is there a sense of that aspect of 'Schatz' also, or is that a later thing, or does that come up at all? I don't remember running across it before,[17] but maybe you have.

NMH I think it's hard to fully understand the nuances of the language at the time and how people would position themselves in relation to God. Definitely, there is a very personal relationship there, since other words that we would, in English, translate as 'beloved' or 'lover' or, you know, words that would be closer to what you're saying, are also used. That's a great question and something that I'll pay more attention to in the future. I'm not sure if maybe Robin has something more here.[18]

RAL Well, I was going to say that, undoubtedly, there is this intimacy with Jesus that is on a par with the intimacy that you have with family, friends, and so on. Yeah. And also that in the hymnals, the hymns take us through the church year, the whole of the church year, and take you through the different parts, the important parts, of the life of Jesus. But even though they do that, there is always – or nearly always – a separate section of 'Jesus-Lieder', where if we haven't had enough of praising Jesus, so we have to have a separate section as well, which is interesting, I think.

NMH Right, and on this, there's also the image of a marriage between the church and Jesus. And so Jesus is called the 'bridegroom' in some instances, and the church is called the 'bride', and so on a more collective level, there is an image of a marriage relationship as a representation for the relationship of Jesus and the church.

MM Yeah.

RT Thank you. Well now, let's hear from Michael on his contribution 'Jesus in Time and Eternity'.

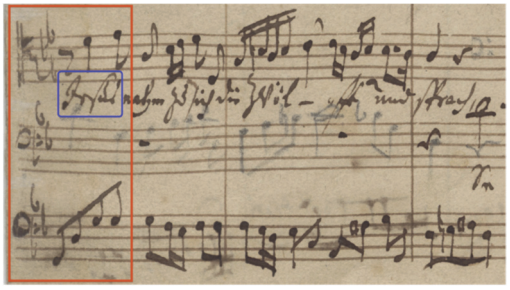


Image 22: Extract from Bach's autograph of BWV 22/1, D-B Mus.ms. Bach P 119, f. 1r

MM So, a kind of interesting biographical fact that only occurred to me recently because of preparing for this video that we're doing together, is that the very first word that was uttered from Bach's cantatas in Leipzig was 'Jesus'. (Image 22) Cantata (BWV) 22 was one of the two cantatas he used for his audition in Leipzig, and there it is: *Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe*. This was the cantata that was performed before the sermon on that occasion. And then, after the sermon, Cantata (BWV) 23 was performed, and that's what I want to spend my just several minutes on. (Image 23)

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn,	[Jesus,] you true God and son of David,
Der du von Ewigkeit in der Entfernung schon	You who in the distance, from eternity,
Mein Herzeleid und meine Leibespein	Already closely looked upon my heartache
Umständlich angesehn, erbarm dich mein!	And my bodily pain, have mercy on me.
Und lass durch deine Wunderhand,	And through your miracle-working hand,
Die so viel Böses abgewandt,	Which has averted so much evil,
Mir gleichfalls Hilf und Trost geschehen!	Let help/salvation and consolation befall me likewise

(translated by Daniel R. Melamed and Michael Marissen)

Image 23: Text and translation of *Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn*, BWV 23/1

And what I would like to suggest is that you have an extraordinary situation in Cantata 23, where the recitative, the second movement of this cantata, acts like what you might sort of think of as a '*sonic* emblem', to tie it to the kind of things that Robin was discussing. So, in order to understand what's going on in that second movement, we need just a little bit of the text from the first movement. It has a slightly strange opening observation, which I'll paraphrase: 'Jesus, you true God and son of David, you who in the distance, from eternity, already were closely looking at the suffering that I'm having, have mercy on me'. So, we're going to focus a little bit on different notions of time and eternity in this second movement. (Image 24)

Let's listen to just the first 20 seconds or so of this extraordinary recitative.

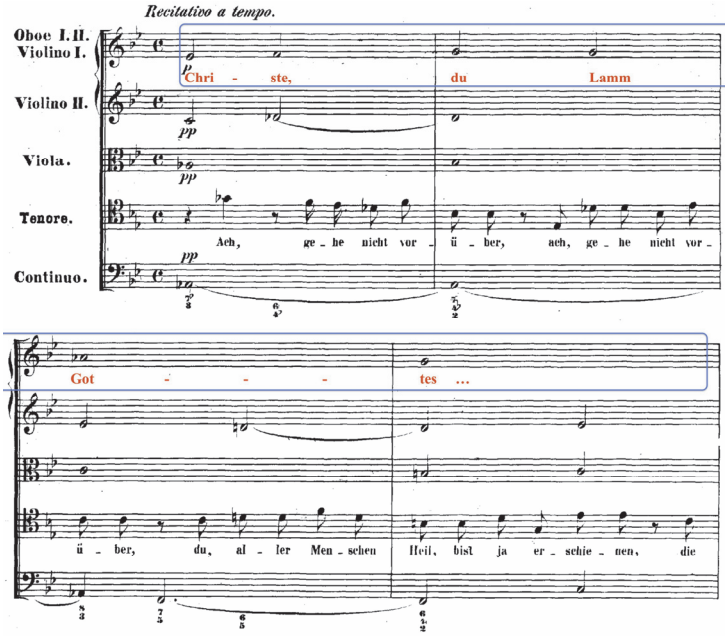


Image 24: The opening of BWV 23/2 with words of the hymn 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes' added

So, what the singer was essentially saying was 'Ah Jesus, don't pass by without saving me'. He's quoting from a story that appears in several different versions in the New Testament of a blind man who asked Jesus not to pass by him as he [Jesus] is on his way to his crucifixion.[19] The man wants to be healed of his blindness. What you've probably heard right away is not only that it's very powerful singing on the part of the tenor, but that there's also this really otherworldly kind of accompaniment coming from the instruments. And that is very interesting because if we highlight the notes that are just on that top line there, you will see that those are, in fact, pitch for pitch the notes of the famous Lutheran hymn 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes'. Extraordinary.

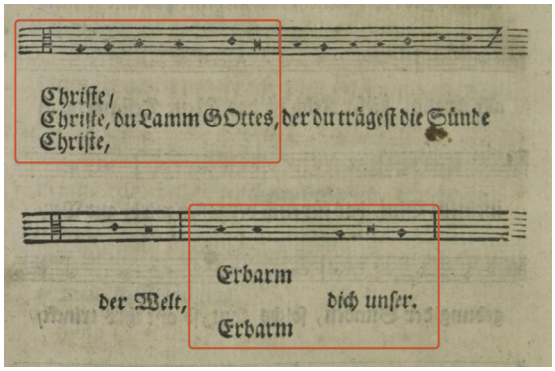


Image 25: 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes' hymn, *Agenda* (Leipzig, 1735), 138

Alright, so why would Bach do that? Well, let's hear what the hymn sounds like by itself first. Here is a page from one of the Leipzig liturgical books of Bach's day,[20] and I'll play just the first couple of lines of the hymn. (Image 25)

And there's the text of it, 'Christ [Jesus], you lamb of God, You who bear the sin of the world, have mercy on us'.

Now, the interesting thing is that even when I've played this for very seasoned Lutheran church musicians, they don't necessarily hear the hymn right away. And what I'm suggesting to you is that this otherworldly accompaniment is going to end up embodying two kinds of eternity. The first of the kinds of eternity that is embodied here is expressed by quoting that hymn in such a way that you don't even notice it at first because what it's representing as a sonic emblem is what Luther and Lutherans called the 'invisible church' as opposed to what they called the 'visible church'. The 'visible church' is just everyone who attends in the building and so on, and the true church is the 'invisible' one that constitutes the communion of all saints who are actually saved,[21] which is what this cantata's about, of course. So, that (namely, the community of saints) is an example of one kind of 'eternity' in Lutheranism, where something has a beginning, but it has no end.[22] And that's what that sonically 'hidden' hymn represents there: an 'eternity' that is contrasting with the 'time' embodied in what the tenor is singing.

Then, at the end of this recitative, and that's what I'll close with – and this time I'll give you the words first and then play the music – the tenor sings, 'I compose myself, and will not let you go, [Jesus], without receiving your blessing'. (Image 26)

Ach! gehe nicht vorüber;	Ah, do not pass by;
Du, aller Menschen Heil,	You [**Jesus**], the salvation of all humankind,
Bist ja erschienen,	Have appeared, yes,
Die Kranken und nicht die Gesunden zu bedienen.	To minister to the sick and not the healthy.
Drum nehm ich ebenfalls an deiner Allmacht teil;	Thus I, likewise, partake of your omnipotence;
Ich sehe dich auf diesen Wegen,	I look upon you in these paths
Worauf man	Where people
Mich hat wollen legen,	Wished to let me lie,
Auch in der Blindheit an.	Also in blindness.
Ich fasse mich	I compose myself
Und lasse dich [gehen]	And will not let you [**Jesus**] go
Nicht ohne deinen Segen.	Without [receiving] your blessing.

(translated by Daniel R. Melamed and Michael Marissen)

Image 26: Text and translation of *Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn*, BWV 23/2

And that's quoting a very, very famous passage from Genesis 32, the foundation story of Israel in which Jacob wrestles with a man or angel – it's a little unclear who he is – and at the end of the night that figure says to Jacob: 'Let me go'; and Jacob answers: 'I will not let you go unless you bless me'. And then Jacob realises, 'Oh my God, I've seen God face to face, and I've survived it'. And Luther was very excited about the idea that the 'God' who Jacob wrestled with was actually God's Messiah, the Divine Son. In Luther's extreme Christocentrism, this was a manifestation of Jesus or the second person of the Trinity coming out of the other

kind of eternity into time; that is to say, the kind of eternity that is 'timeless', where everything is but one permanent 'now', such that, for example, God experiences the past, the present, and the future, as it were, simultaneously. So, there, in this instance, at Genesis 32, then, Jesus is coming out of eternity into history, even before he becomes manifest as Jesus of Nazareth and dies on the cross.

And this same idea comes up in the Bach motet *Ich lasse dich nicht* (BWV 1164), which is word for word Genesis 32, verse 26. The motet text throws the words 'my Jesus' in there, to show that it was completely understood by Lutherans that when you say, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me', that Jacob's 'you' is referring to Jesus. And only Luther thought that – or, Luther is one of the only people who really thought that.[23] But it's important for understanding the Bach vocal works, to realise that that's the understanding.

Here's the final part of the piece, then, now with the words of the hymn inserted into the instrumental line. (Image 27) And what I want to set up for you is that once again you have a contrast between time and eternity. But the last note of the hymn is harmonised inconclusively, such that its resolution comes from the outside the 'eternal' strands of the recitative's texture. Thus, these various questions that are being asked of God-in-eternity are in fact answered musically, not textually, by the ensemble saying 'V–I' (a perfectly resolving cadential ending), that is to say, 'Yes'.

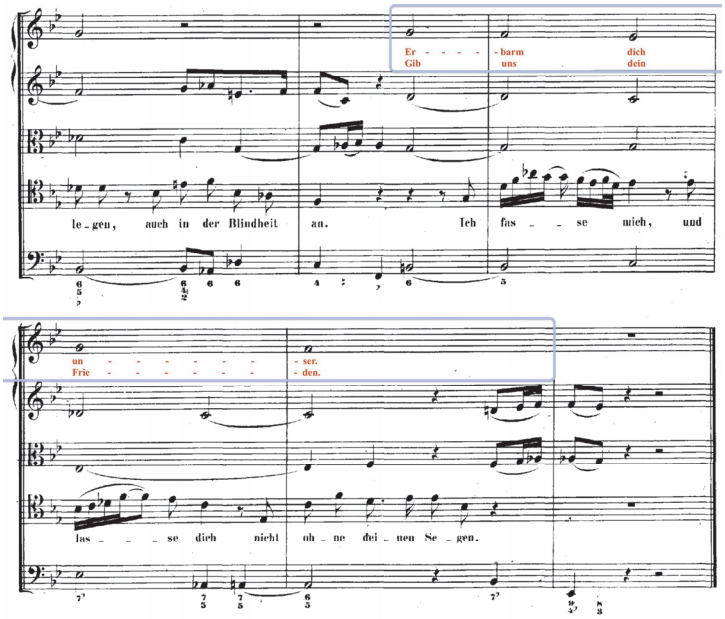


Image 27: The ending of BWV 23/2 with words of the hymn added

So, the idea is that those melodic lines from the instrumental hymn that enter into the recitative are examples of both 'everlasting'-eternity and 'timeless'-eternity breaking into time, by giving the answer that the tenor supplicant is looking for. And so, I see Cantata 23 not just as an artistic manifesto as is often said about this audition piece of Bach, but also as a sort of *religious*-musical manifesto. This is what music can do. Music can do things that words alone can't. Great, thanks.

RT Thank you, thank you, Michael. So, briefly, Robin and Noelle, how do we take the conversation forward from this?

RAL I think Michael is onto something here. There is this dialectic between 'Zeit und Ewigkeit' that is a constant thing. One of the former archdeacons of the Thomas Church, Martin Geier, preached an annual cycle of sermons, on 'Zeit und Ewigkeit'. And they're structured exactly like that; every one of them!

'This is it in time', and then the second part, 'this is it in eternity'. Every single one. So, this is, as I say, a dialectic that you come across very frequently in Lutheran writings.

MM Yeah, notions of eternity are very hard to capture in music though. I mean, that's what I think is…

RAL You are right!

MM … genius about this cantata that he, Bach, found a way, so to speak, to translate such things, which I think is amazing.

RAL Yup. And the 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes' melody is very interesting. Some of the hymnals don't even include the text or the tune. And that indicates that, in fact, we're not sure where it comes from. We know it's from Luther and Luther's version of the 'Agnus Dei', but yeah…

MM I thought you were going to say it's *timeless*, yeah…

RAL Yeah, yeah.

RT Time is moving. We could complete our discussion by looking more closely at one of Bach's liturgical cantatas, the three of you together. Robin, I think you have more to say about one of your emblem images, and how it relates to Cantata (BWV) 61.

RAL Well, I would just point out that the first emblem in the Rittmeyer is 'Jesus knocking on the door' and above the verse is Revelation 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any of you hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with you and you with me'. (Image 28) So, it has a Eucharistic connection there. This is the libretto of movement four of Cantata 61, the Advent cantata with the libretto by Neumeister. But the next movement, movement five of Cantata 61, is, in a sense, referring to this kind of imagery that is here, which reads: 'Open my whole heart; Jesus comes and moves in'. And there are other connections like this that you're going to find in the cantatas where there is a visual, as well as a verbal image.

Image 28 (see Image 2 for caption)

NMH I think it's interesting. Thank you for this, again a visual that brings the two (Jesus and heart) together. And I think it's interesting that in the Calov Bible on Revelation 3:20 the commentary also clearly indicates that this door is a door to the heart, and that the heart, through faith, becomes a dwelling place for Jesus.[24] And so, there we see again the image, kind of imposed on this verse, of the heart, and that it signifies *indwelling* a human heart. And then also, maybe not in this context but throughout the cantatas and literature, we see the opposite of letting Jesus into the heart. And that would be, of course, letting evil into the heart, or all manner of the opposite of Jesus – sin or the material rather than the spiritual. So, the whole image of a heart seems to be so central and important.

RAL Right. Hence the emblem of Jesus sweeping out all these evil things.

MM Yeah. Another aspect of this that you made me think then about is that I believe we can make sense out of what happens at the end of Cantata 61 too – there's much discussion about why the chorale that closes that cantata is supposedly 'mangled', as some Bach scholars have said because the choir sings only the second half of the stanza, starting with the words 'Amen, Amen, Come you beautiful crown of joy'. But what people don't, I think, realise, is that just a few verses before, in Revelation 3 – I think it's verse 14 or so in there – just before the part that is in Robin's emblem, Jesus is referred to as the personification of Amen.[25] So here the idea, then, is that at the closing movement of this cantata, the 'Amen, Amen', is not just an affirmation of everything expressed in the cantata, but it's also an invocation for Jesus, the 'Amen', to come through the door. That's the way I would hear it.

RAL Yeah.

RT Wow. Well, all I can say is, that's a perfect way to conclude. It's a very unified discussion. Thank you so much, Robin, Noelle, Michael. It was wonderful! Thank you for these presentations, and for fuelling this discussion with all these new and stimulating ideas.

And thank you for engaging with this topic, whether you are watching, listening, or reading. On our *Discussing Bach* web page, you will find a full authorised transcript, short biographies of our speakers, a list of further reading and listening, and much more. Thank you.

Notes

1 Johann Rittmeyer, *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl der Kinder Gottes auff Erden Oder Geistreiche Gebete, so vor / bey und nach der Beicht und heiligem Abendmahl, kräfftig zu gebrauchen: Nebenst Heilsamen Unterricht Wie wir uns dabei zu verhalten* … (Lüneburg: Stern, 1730).

2 *Cor Jesu amanti sacrum. Anton Wierix fecit et exud.* [s.l.: s. n., ca. 1600].

3 The person on the left is a Franciscan monk.

[4] *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten, darinnen der Erste Theil das Gebetbuch, der Ander Theil Das Gesangbuch: Nebst einer Vorrede Herrn Gottlob Friedr. Seligmanns* (Leipzig: Würdig, 1694).

[5] *Anleitung zur Hauß- und Hertzens-Andacht: welche Ein Christlicher Hauß-Vater mit seinen Kindern und Gesinde anstellen ... kan: Erstlich Im Gebet / auff alle Tag in der Wochen Zum andern In einer Vorbereitung Zu nützlicher Sabbaths- und Fest-Feyer durchs gantze Jahr: Mit schönen Kupfern gezirt / Nebst einer Vorrede Tit. Herrn L. Gottlob Friedrich Seligmanns ...* (Leipzig: Würdig, 1694).

[6] *Doct. Heinrich Müllers, weiland der Theologischen Facultät Seniorn, und Superrintendenten in Rostock, Vermehrter und durchgehends verbesserter Himmlischer Liebes-Kuss, oder, Göttliche Liebes-Flamme: das ist, Aufmunterung zur Liebe Gottes: durch Vorstellung dessen unendlichen Liebe gegen uns: mit vielen schönen Sinnbildern gezieret, und mit nöthigen Registern versehen: auch ist dieser neuen Auflage beygefüget worden, ein evangelischer und epistolischer Weg-Weiser, wie man sich derer Capitel auf die H. Sonn-Fest-und Feyer-Täge bedienen könne* (Nuremberg: Endters, 1722).

[7] English translation from Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, rev. and trans. Richard D. P. Jones (Oxford University Press, 2005), 158.

[8] For an elaborated study on this topic, see Noelle M. Heber, *J. S. Bach's Material and Spiritual Treasures: A Theological Perspective* (Boydell & Brewer, 2021).

[9] Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 100.

[10] Johannes Olearius, *Biblische Erklärung Darinnen / nechst dem allgemeinen Haupt-Schlüssel der gantzen heiligen Schrifft* ..., vol. V: Neues Testament (5 vols, Leipzig, 1678–81), 395.

[11] Heinrich Müller, *Apostolische Schluß-Kette und Krafft-Kern* (Frankfurt, 1671), 478.

[12] Heber, *J. S. Bach's Material and Spiritual Treasures*, 63–90.

[13] August Pfeiffer, *Apostolische Christen-Schule* (Lübeck, 1704), 124.

[14] Abraham Calov, *Die Heilige Bibel nach S. Herrn D. Martini Lutheri Deutscher Dolmetschung und Erklärung* ... (3 vols, Wittenberg, 1681–82), vol. III/2, col. 439.

[15] Olearius, vol. V, 1305.

[16] Heber, *J. S. Bach's Material and Spiritual Treasures*, 209–240.

[17] After our video recording, I checked Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart* (Ausgabe letzter Hand, Leipzig 1793–1801), digital version in the Digital Dictionary of the Trier Center for Digital Humanities, Version 01/21, and in Bach's day and earlier, 'mein Schatz' was indeed often used in the extremely informal sense of 'my darling' – thus, for example, the famous line 'mein Schatz ist das A und O' in the closing chorale from Bach's cantata *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (BWV 1) ought perhaps to be rendered in English as '[Jesus,] my darling[,] is the A[lpha] and O[mega]'.

[18] Upon further reflection, I would like to clarify that even though words of affection are often used in relation to Jesus, in this context the relationship would have had a distinctly spiritual nature in contrast to a romantic human one. Furthermore, since Jesus was considered the greatest treasure that one could obtain, he would have been valued even above one's most intimate human relationships.

[19] Mark 10:46–52, with parallels at Matthew 20:29–34 (also 9:27–31) and Luke 18:35–43.

[20] *Agenda, das ist, Kirchen-Ordnung, wie sich die Pfarrherren und Seelsorger in ihren Aemtern und Diensten verhalten sollen* (Leipzig, 1735), 138.

[21] Philip Melanchthon, 'Apology of the Augsburg Confession', trans. Charles Arand, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2000), 107–294, at 174–183.

[22] As explained, for example, in the entry on 'Ewigkeit' in Christian Stock, *Homiletisches Real-Lexicon oder Reicher Vorrath zur geist- und weltlichen Beredtsamkeit* (Jena, 1734), 398–399.

[23] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, vol. 6, Lectures on Genesis:* Chapters 31–37, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Paul D. Pahl (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 144, where Luther states: 'Without any controversy we shall say that this man [with whom Jacob wrestled] was not an angel but our Lord Jesus Christ, eternal God and future Man, to be crucified by the Jews'.

[24] Calov, *Die Heilige Bibel*, vol. III/2, cols. 1364–65.

[25] In the Luther Bibles of Bach's day, Revelation 3:14 reads: 'Das saget Amen, … der Anfang der Creatur Gottes' ('This [is what Jesus, the personification of] "Amen" says, … [he who is] the origin of God's creation [according to John 1:1–3]'). The German of modern Luther Bibles reads more clearly: 'Das sagt, *der* Amen *heißt*, … der Anfang der Schöpfung Gottes' ('*He* [Jesus] *who is called* "Amen" says this, … [he who is] the origin of God's creation'). Emphasis added.