

*shall come unto me¹⁵⁰ the leader¹⁵¹ who would be a
[divine] lord¹⁵² over my people Israel. ’’*

51. Ach, wenn wird die Zeit erscheinen?
Ach, wenn kömmt der Trost
Der Seinen?
Schweigt, er ist schon wirklich hier!
Jesu, ach so komm zu mir!

51. Ah, when will the time [of the kingdom of God]¹⁵³ appear?
Ah, when is [God’s messiah,] the consolation of
Those who [shall] belong to him, coming?
Be silent!—he¹⁵⁴ is actually already here!
Jesus, ah, then come to me.

52. Mein Liebster herrschet schon.
Ein Herz, das seine Herrschaft liebet
Und sich ihm ganz zu eigen gibet,
Ist meines Jesu Thron.

52. My most beloved already [in infancy] rules [as messiah].
A heart [of mine] that loves his [the messiah’s] dominion,
And wholly gives itself to him to possess,
Is the throne of my Jesus.

53. Zwar ist solche Herzensstube

53. True, such a heart’s chamber¹⁵⁷ is

¹⁵⁰“Unto/For me” does not appear in the best Greek texts of Matthew. This expression was inserted into some Greek manuscripts of Matthew on the basis of Micah 5:1, which the Luther Bibles rendered “Und du, Bethlehem Ephrata, die du klein bist unter den Tausenden in Juda, aus dir soll mir der kommen, der in Israel HERR [or, ‘Herr’] sei” ([God says,] “And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, you who are small [i.e., insignificant] among the thousands in Judah, out of you shall come unto me the one who in Israel would be [the] LORD [or, ‘(a) lord’]”). With regard to the significance of upper-case orthography for “Herr,” see fn. 152, below.

¹⁵¹To render “Herzog” here as “duke” (an aristocratic title higher than a count but lower than a king) might be technically correct but would sound too awkward. “Duke” comes from the Latin “dux” (“leader”), and “Herzog” comes from combining the noun “Heer” (“army”) and the past tense of the verb “ziehen” (“to draw or pull”); thus a “Herzog” or “duke” is literally or figuratively “a military leader.” The word was employed in the Luther Bibles of Bach’s day and earlier to refer to leaders who were not aristocratic political rulers of a duchy. In 1 Samuel 25:30 and 2 Samuel 5:2 in the Luther Bibles of Bach’s day, King David is rendered a “Herzog [Hebrew, ‘nagiyd’ (literally, ‘one in front’)] over Israel”; and in Hebrews 2:10, Jesus is called a “Herzog der Seligkeit” (“captain” [or, ‘pioneer’; Greek, ‘archegos’ (‘chief leader’)] of [eternal] ‘blessedness’ [or, ‘salvation’]).

¹⁵²Matthew speaks here of the one “who will shepherd [i.e., rule] my people Israel,” but the Luther Bibles rendered this phrase as “who would be a ‘HERR’/‘Herr’ over my people Israel.” The word “Herr,” with only its “H” in upper-case, can simply mean “lord” in one of its senses of “master” or “ruler,” but the Luther Bibles of Bach’s day (e.g., the Olearius commentary Bible that Bach owned) often, if not typically, gave the word in partial or all upper-case letters here in Matthew 2:6 (“HERR,” or “HErr,” is an orthographical convention signifying explicitly that the divine “Lord [God]” is being spoken of, and this convention was followed for movement 50 in the printed libretto booklets that were made available to Bach’s fellow congregants; in this context, “Israel” could be taken to mean not “Old Israel,” the synagogue, but “New Israel,” the church [see also movement 27]). Whether upper-cased or not, the choice of “Herr” in the Luther Bibles is tendentious, as the direct senses of the underlying terms in both Micah and Matthew could easily and readily have been captured altogether straightforwardly with the German words “Herrscher” (“ruler”), “Fürst” (“prince”), or “Hirt” (“shepherd”), the terms that the later German Bibles do employ.

¹⁵³As queried in Luke 17:20.

¹⁵⁴Grammatically and semantically, this “er,” understood as “he,” can refer to “him” (Jesus), or as “it,” to “der Trost” (“the consolation”), or “er” could refer to both simultaneously. The line may also be drawing on Romans 8:34-35, which Luther idiosyncratically rendered as “Wer will die Auserwählten Gottes beschuldigen? Gott ist hier, der da gerecht macht. Wer will verdammen? Christus ist hier, der gestorben ist, ja vielmehr, der auch auferweckt ist” (“Who [is there that] will [be able to] charge those chosen of God? God [who has mercy] is here, who does make [people] justified [for eternal salvation]. Who [is there that] will [be able to] condemn [to eternal damnation]? Christ [who redeems and consoles] is here, who has died, yes rather, who also has been raised [from death to life]”).

¹⁵⁷“Herzensstube” was a German rendering of the Latin term “prytaneum,” a building in ancient Greece where the “prytanis” (“presiding ruler”) resided; a sacred fire was kept continuously burning inside, and its hall contained the ruler’s “thronus” (“throne”). The writer of this hymn verse was apparently playing with a notion of the Christian sinner’s architecturally metaphorical “prytaneum” as a medically metaphorical “ventriculi cordis”—in German, the “Herzkammer” (“heart chamber”)—where Jesus would dwell. This is not to say that regular folk among Bach’s listeners needed or were expected to know any classical references to get the devotionally essential point of this poetry.

**Wohl kein schöner Fürstensaal,
Sondern eine finstre Grube;
Doch, sobald dein Gnadenstrahl
In demselben¹⁵⁵ nur wird blinken,
Wird es voller Sonnen dünken.¹⁵⁶**

**Certainly no beautiful princely hall,
[But] rather a dark [sin-filled] pit;¹⁵⁸
Yet, [Jesus,] as soon as your stream of grace
Will merely flicker within this same¹⁵⁹ [heart],
It [the heart]¹⁶⁰ will seem full of sun.**

6. Teil

Part 6

54. Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben,
So gib, dass wir im festen Glauben

54. Lord, when the insolent¹⁶¹ enemies snort [like war
horses],¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵There is a great deal of confusion over the German wording of this line. Bach's own score, in the soprano part and alto part among his original performing parts (which are at this spot in Bach's handwriting), and in the contemporary hymnbooks, the second word reads "demselben," yielding either the sense "in this hall" or (more likely—see fn. 160, below), if the antecedent is taken to be the word "Herz" from the end of the previous hymn stanza (a stanza not included in the *Christmas Oratorio*, but whose word "Herz" does appear in line 2 of the previous movement), "in this heart." In the tenor part and bass part among Bach's original performing parts (which are at this spot likewise in Bach's handwriting) and in some modern editions, however, this reads "derselben," yielding either the sense "in this chamber" or "in this pit." But in the printed libretto booklets made available to Bach's fellow congregants and in some modern editions, this reads "denselben," yielding either the sense "into this hall" or "in these places [i.e., in some combination of the 'heart chamber,' 'unprincely hall,' 'dark pit,' and 'heart']." Some modern editions give "dieselbe," and "sie" for "es" in the next line, yielding either the sense "into this chamber" or "into this pit." With regard to the "es" in the final line, see also fn. 160, below.

¹⁵⁶A stanza of "Ihr Gestirn, ihr hohlen Lüfte."

¹⁵⁸The "Grube" ("pit") can be understood here in context as a "Herzgrube," which was defined as "eine kleine Höhle oder Grube in der Mitte des äussern Leibes gleich unter der Brust" ("a small cavity or pit in the middle of the outer [part of the] body just below the breast"). Note that in movement 45, the implied character interjects, "in meiner Brust, / Hier wohnt er" ("in my breast; / Here he [Jesus] dwells"). This pit in movement 53 is "dark" with *sin*. It is worth noting that "Dunkelheit" is a separate, more casual German term for simple physical darkness. "Finsternis," by contrast, is a more intense term, the one that would be employed to refer to concepts such as "the powers of darkness" ("die Mächte der Finsternis").

¹⁵⁹With regard to the German source word for "this same" being "demselben," "derselben," "denselben," or "dieselbe," see fn. 155, above.

¹⁶⁰Given that there are no nouns in this stanza whose gender is neuter, the "es" ("it") in this line most probably takes as its antecedent the "Herz" ("heart") of movement 52, the antecedent that might otherwise, or also, be understood from this hymn's previous stanza, "Komm, mein Herz, das soll zum besten, / So viel möglich, dich begästen" ("Come, my heart, which shall for the best, / As much as [it is] possible [to do so], host you [Jesus] as guest"). Alternatively, the "it" in the last line of movement 52 might simply be an example of what linguists call "dummy pronouns" (words functioning grammatically as pronouns, but which do not have antecedents like normal, referential pronouns do), and in this case the line would be conveying "It will seem bright in here," such that the "it" would be just like the one in the expression "Es regnet" ("It is raining").

¹⁶¹While "Stolz" primarily means "proud" in a more dignified sense, it is also an archaic synonym for "übermutig," in the sense of "insolent" or "cocky." In this way the word "Stolz" has the same double sense as the word "zed" in Hebrew, which means both "presumptuous" and "insolent." Movement 64 identifies the four (proud/insolent) "eschatological enemies" of humankind: death, devil, sin, and hell.

¹⁶²It is not on the face of it obvious what "schnauben" would mean here. Some of the ways that the word might be used included as a synonym for "schnarchen" ("to snore"), or for "schnaufen" ("to wheeze"), or for "schwer athem holen" ("to breathe heavily"), or for "spüren, suchen, spähen" ("to sense, seek, spy"), or for "zornig und feindlich sich gebahren" ("to behave angrily and hostilely"). In the Bach secondary literature it has been suggested that this line is quoting Psalm 56:3, "Meine Feinde schnauben täglich; denn viele streiten stolz wider mich" ("My enemies daily behave angrily and hostilely; for many [people] battle proudly against me"). But that particular wording of the Psalm, which is said to come from the early Luther Bibles, actually stems from the nineteenth century; the Luther Bibles of Bach's day and earlier gave "Meine Feinde versenken mich täglich; denn viel streiten wider mich stolziglich" ("My enemies daily plunge me into misery; for many [people] battle against me in a proud manner"). A plausible sense-giving biblical source for this use of "schnauben" linked with "enemies" in the *Christmas Oratorio*, however, is Luther's idiosyncratic rendering of Jeremiah 8:16, which says of an enemy approach, "man höret, dass ihre Rosse bereit schnauben zu Dan" ("[the sound,] that their horses are snorting is heard already in [the border city of] Dan [all the way inland, to Jerusalem]").

Nach deiner Macht und Hilfe sehn!
Wir wollen dir allein vertrauen,
So können wir den scharfen Klauen
Des Feindes unversehrt entgehn.

Then grant that we, in steadfast faith,
Might look to your power and salvation!
We will put our trust in you alone;
Thus can we escape
The enemy's sharp clutches unharmed.

55. *Da berief Herodes die Weisen heimlich und erlernt¹⁶³ mit Fleiss von ihnen, wenn der Stern erschienen wäre. Und weiset¹⁶⁴ sie gen Bethlehem und sprach: Ziehet hin und forschet fleissig nach dem Kindlein, und wenn ihrs findet, sagt mirs wieder,¹⁶⁵ dass ich auch komme und es anbetet.¹⁶⁶*

55. *Then Herod convened the wisemen secretly,¹⁶⁷ seeking to learn fully¹⁶⁸ from them, with diligence, when the star might have [first] appeared. And, directing them to Bethlehem, [he] declared: "Set out and search diligently for the little child, and when you find it, report this to me, so that I, too, may come and worship it."*

56. Du Falscher, suche nur den Herrn zu fällen,
Nimm alle falsche List,
Dem Heiland nachzustellen;
Der, dessen Kraft kein Mensch ermisst,

56. You deceitful one, [Herod,] just try to bring down [Jesus,] the Lord;
[Just go ahead and] use every [bit of] deceitful cunning
To lie in wait¹⁷⁰ for the savior;¹⁷¹

¹⁶³This verb is in historical-present tense, "erlernt" ("seeks to learn fully"); many Bibles gave it in past tense, "erlernte" ("sought to learn fully"). With regard to the senses of "erlernen," see fn. 168, below.

¹⁶⁴This verb is in historical-present tense, "weiset" ("directs"); many German Bibles gave it in past tense, "wies" ("directed").

¹⁶⁵In the printed libretto booklet made available to Bach's fellow congregants, this reads not "und wenn ihrs findet, sagt mirs wieder" ("and when you [do] find it [the child], report this to me") but "und wenn ihrs findet, so sagt mirs wieder" ("and if/when you [should] find it [the child], then report this to me"). In Bach's own score, the latter reading was revised to the former. Luther Bibles of Bach's day and earlier gave one or the other of these readings; e.g., the Calov commentary Bible, which Bach owned, gives the latter, whereas the Olearius commentary Bible, which Bach also owned, gives the former.

¹⁶⁶Matthew 2:7-8.

¹⁶⁷Luther, like other biblical commentators, suggested that King Herod wanted to keep all this secret, lest Jews might come to accept the birth of God's messiah-king and thus take occasion to revolt against the current regime.

¹⁶⁸"Erlernen," an uncommon usage, strictly speaking (as here) meant "völlig lernen" ("to fully/exactly learn"), and might be applied, e.g., to the proper learning of a language or a trade; otherwise, the word might be used simply as a synonym for "lernen" ("to learn"). "Erlernen" could also mean "to inquire fully," and so, to capture both senses, we have understood the word here to mean "to seek to learn fully."

¹⁷⁰In older German, "nachstellen" had a variety of meanings, including as a synonym for "auflauern" ("to lie in ambush for" or "to lay/lie in wait for"). Its use in Mark 6:19 is linguistically and narratively relevant to the *Christmas Oratorio*: "Herodias aber stellte ihm nach, und wollte ihn töten" ("But Herodias lay in wait for him [John the Baptist] and wanted to kill him"). Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod the Great (the Herod of the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke), and sister of Herod Agrippa I (the Herod of Acts 12). She was first married to her paternal half-uncle Herod (mistakenly called "Philip" in Mark 6:17 and in many manuscripts of Matthew 14:3), to whom she bore a daughter, identified by the first-century historian Josephus as "Salome" (not to be confused with the Salome of Mark 15-16, the Salome who was possibly the wife of Zebedee). Salome was the one who at Herodias's instigation asked her uncle and now step-father Herod Antipas (another half-uncle of Herodias and her second husband) for the head of John the Baptist as a reward for a special dance of Salome's that Antipas had enjoyed. Herodias lay in wait for John because he had publicly condemned her marriage to Antipas (she had abandoned her first husband, and Antipas had divorced his royal Nabatean wife). In all the potential confusion of names, the one clear thing is that there was a great deal of depravity among the Herodians, and the *Christmas Oratorio* librettist may have used the language of Mark 6 because of this: just like Herodias later lies in wait for John, so does Herod now lie in wait for God's messiah, Jesus.

¹⁷¹This movement is meditating ahead of time, as it were, on the passage in Matthew that comes right after the last part of that book that is explicitly narrated in the *Christmas Oratorio*, namely Matthew 2:12, in movement 60. In Matthew 2:13-16, "der Engel des HERREN" ("the angel of the LORD") appears to Joseph, the father of Jesus, in a dream and tells him to flee with Mary and Jesus to

Bleibt doch in sichrer Hand.¹⁶⁹
Dein Herz, dein falsches Herz ist schon,
Nebst aller seiner List, des Höchsten Sohn,
Den du zu stürzen suchst, sehr wohl bekannt.

He [the Lord Jesus] whose might no human comprehends,¹⁷²
Remains nonetheless in [God the Most High's]¹⁷³ sure hand.
Your heart, your deceitful heart,
Together with all its cunning, is already very well known
To the Most High's son, [God's messiah] whom you seek to
overthrow.

57. Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen
Stürzt ohnmächtiger Menschen Macht.
Hier wird alle Kraft verlacht!
Spricht der Höchste nur ein Wort,
Seiner Feinde Stolz zu enden,
O, so müssen sich sofort
Sterblicher Gedanken wenden.

57. Just one wave from his [the Most High's] hands
Overthrows the power of impotent humankind.
Here [with God] all [human] might is derided!
If the Most High declares just one word
To put a stop to the insolence¹⁷⁴ of his enemies,
Oh, then [their] mortal thoughts
Must turn immediately [to naught].¹⁷⁵

58. *Als sie nun den König gehöret hatten, zogen sie hin.
Und siehe, der Stern, den sie im Morgenlande gesehen
hatten, ging für ihnen hin, bis dass er kam und stund
oben über, da das Kindlein war. Da sie den Stern
sahen, wurden sie hoch erfreuet und gingen in das
Haus und funden das Kindlein mit Maria, seiner
Mutter, und fielen nieder und beteten es an und täten*

58. *Now when they had heard [Herod] the king, they set
out. And look: the star that they had seen in the Orient
went forth before them, until, having come [to
Bethlehem], it settled up above [the place] where the
little child was. When they saw the star, they became
exceedingly gladdened and went into the house¹⁷⁷ and
found the little child with Mary its mother, and bowed*

Egypt because Herod is aiming to murder the child portended to become king; Herod, duped by the wisemen, who do not come back to report to him, becomes furious and orders the killing of “alle Kinder” (“all the children”) in Bethlehem and its vicinity that were two years old and under. This narrative was meant to be understood as having been foreshadowed by the narrative of Exodus 1:22, where the Pharaoh in Egypt commands his people, “alle Söhne, die geboren werden, werft ins Wasser” (“throw into the water [of the Nile river] all sons that are born [to the Hebrews]”), but Pharaoh’s daughter took pity on the Hebrew child Moses and raised him as her son.

¹⁶⁹The line reads “in sichern Stand” (“in [a] sure foothold”) in the printed librettos made available to Bach’s fellow congregants. This may have been the librettist’s original reading, as it seems to provide a better contrast with line 1’s “fällen” (“bring down”). Whether the new version, “Bleibt doch in sichrer Hand” (“Remains nonetheless in [God the Most High’s] sure hand”), was an intended revision or simply a copying mistake is unclear. A possible advantage of the new reading, however, is that it would identify the source of Jesus’s security, despite his own humanly incomprehensible power, more clearly in God the father. See also the “hands” in line 1 of the next movement, and see also fn. 173, below.

¹⁷²“Ermessen” is employed here apparently not in its sense of “abmessen/ausmessen” (“to measure”) but in one of its older-German senses of “erfassen/begreifen” (“to grasp,” in the sense of “to conceive of” or “to comprehend”).

¹⁷³The reading of this line as found in Bach’s materials seems to draw, in a sort of mirror image, on Luther’s text for Psalm 77:11, “Ich muss das leiden; die rechte Hand des Höchsten kann alles ändern” (“[God’s apparently forgetting to be merciful,] this [is something that] I have to suffer; the right hand of the Most High can change everything”); the meaning of the Hebrew text of this verse is now uncertain, and thus modern renderings differ significantly from one another.

¹⁷⁴With regard to “stolz” as “insolent,” see fn. 161, above.

¹⁷⁵“Sich wenden” here is an archaic synonym for “sich endigen” or “sich enden” (“to come/bring to an end,” “to cut short”). The sense of the last two lines here is derived from Psalm 33:10, “der HERR macht zu nicht der Heiden Rat, und wendet die Gedanken der Völker” (“The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen/gentiles to naught, and turns [to naught] the thoughts of the peoples”).

¹⁷⁷There is no mention of a “house” (or “wisemen”) in the infancy narrative of Luke, and there is no mention of a “manger” (or “shepherds”) in the narrative of Matthew. Those intent on harmonizing the narratives have either understood the wisemen to have visited a stable with a manger inside a building that is called an “inn” in Luke but a “house” in Matthew, or understood the wisemen to have visited a few days later than had the shepherds, when Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus would have been able to find better lodging than what had been available to them during the busy and crowded time at the start of a census.

*ihre Schätze auf und schenkten ihm Gold, Weihrauch und Myrrhen.*¹⁷⁶

**59. Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier,
O Jesulein, mein Leben;
Ich komme, bring und schenke dir,
Was du mir hast gegeben.
Nimm hin, es ist mein Geist und Sinn,
Herz, Seel und Mut, nimm alles hin,
Und lass dirs wohlgefallen!**¹⁷⁸

*60. Und Gott befahl ihnen im Traum, dass sie sich nicht sollten wieder zu Herodes lenken, und zogen durch einen andern Weg wieder*¹⁸⁰ *in ihr Land.*¹⁸¹

61. So geht! Genug, mein Schatz geht nicht von hier,
Er bleibet da bei mir;
Ich will ihn auch nicht von mir lassen.
Sein Arm wird mich aus Lieb
Mit sanftmutsvollem Trieb
Und grösster Zärtlichkeit umfassen;
Er soll mein Bräutigam verbleiben,
Ich will ihm Brust und Herz verschreiben.
Ich weiss gewiss, er liebet mich,
Mein Herz liebt ihn auch inniglich
Und wird ihn ewig ehren.
Was könnte mich nun für ein Feind
Bei solchem Glück versehren!
Du, Jesu, bist und bleibst mein Freund;
Und werd ich ängstlich zu dir flehn:

¹⁷⁶Matthew 2:9-11.

¹⁷⁸The first stanza of this hymn.

¹⁷⁹For their sense, lines 5–6 draw in part on the language of Hebrews 4:12, “Denn das Wort Gottes ist lebendig und kräftig und schärfer denn kein zweischneidig Schwert, und durchdringet, bis dass es scheidet Seele und Geist, ... und ist ein Richter der Gedanken und Sinne des Herzens” (“For the word of God is living and mighty, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierces until it separates soul and spirit ... and is a judge of the thoughts and inclinations of the heart”).

¹⁸⁰This second use of the word “wieder” (“back”) is lacking in the printed libretto booklet made available to Bach’s fellow congregants; the wording Bach used corresponds to the text in the contemporary Luther Bibles.

¹⁸¹Matthew 2:12.

¹⁸²Song of Songs 3:4, “Ich halte ihn, und will ihn nicht [los]lassen” (“I hold him [my beloved], and will not let him [loose/free]”).

¹⁸³The “arm” of Jesus is meant to be paralleled to the powerful saving “arm of God” that is continually spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Isaiah 59:16 and 63:5).

¹⁸⁴“Tenderful” is, to be sure, an *outré* word, but so is the source word, “sanftmutsvolle.”

¹⁸⁵In older German, “Zärtlichkeit” had a variety of now obsolete meanings, including as a synonym for “Zartheit” (“delicateness,” “delicacy”).

¹⁸⁶“Verbleiben” (here, “to permanently remain”) can be used as an intensified form of “bleiben” (“to remain”).

down and worshiped it, and opened their treasures, presenting it gold, frankincense, and myrrh as gifts.

**59. Here I stand at your manger,
Oh little Jesus, [you who are] my life;
To you I come, bringing and presenting as gifts
What [endowments] you have given me.
Accept [this], it is my spirit and inclination,
Heart, soul, and courage;¹⁷⁹ accept [this] all,
And let it please you greatly.**

60. And God commanded them in a dream that they should not direct themselves back to Herod, and [so they] set off by another path back to their country.

61. So go! Enough [that] my treasure [Jesus] is not taking his leave;
He is remaining here with me;
I also wish not to let him [free]¹⁸² from me.
His [saving] arm¹⁸³ will embrace me out of love
With tenderful¹⁸⁴ impulse
And greatest delicacy;¹⁸⁵
He shall permanently remain¹⁸⁶ my bridegroom;
Breast and heart I wish to commit to him.
I know for certain that he loves me;
My heart also loves him intimately
And will eternally honor him.
Now, with [my experiencing] such a good fortune,
What kind of enemy could [ever] harm me!
You, Jesus, are and remain my friend;

Herr, hilf!, so lass mich Hilfe sehn!

62. Nun mögt ihr stolzen Feinde schrecken;
Was könnt ihr mir für Furcht erwecken?
Mein Schatz, mein Hort ist hier bei mir!
Ihr mögt euch noch so grimmig stellen,
Droht nur, mich ganz und gar zu fällen,
Doch seht! mein Heiland wohnt hier.

63. Was will der Höllen Schrecken nun,
Was will uns Welt und Sünde tun,
Da wir in Jesu Händen ruhn!

**64. Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen
An eurer Feinde Schar,
Denn Christus hat zerbrochen,
Was euch zuwider war.
Tod, Teufel, Sünd und Hölle
Sind ganz und gar geschwächt;
Bei Gott hat seine Stelle
Das menschliche Geschlecht.**¹⁸⁸

And if I should anxiously plead unto you:
“Lord, save [me]!,” then let me see salvation.

62. [Well] now, you insolent¹⁸⁷ enemies do like to horrify;
[Yet] what kind of fear could you arouse in me?
My treasure, [Jesus,] my refuge is here with me!
You do like to act oh so fierce;
Just [go ahead and] threaten to bring me down well and truly;
But look! My savior dwells here [in my heart].

63. What, now, will hell’s horror want [to do to us Christians];
What will [the] world and sin want to do to us,
Now that we rest in Jesus’s hands!

**64. Now you [God’s chosen Christians]¹⁸⁹ are well avenged
Of your band of enemies,
For Christ has shattered
What was against you.
Death, devil, sin, and hell
Are well and truly diminished;
The human family¹⁹⁰
Has its place with God [in eternity].**

(transl. Michael Marissen and Daniel R. Melamed)



Scan or go to <http://www.BachCantataTexts.org/BWV248.2> for an annotated translation

¹⁸⁷With regard to “stolz” as “insolent,” see fn. 161, above.

¹⁸⁸A stanza of “Ihr Christen auserkoren.”

¹⁸⁹This is the subject of the hymn text, “Ihr Christen auserkoren” (“You Christians Chosen [by God]”).

¹⁹⁰It may seem that “Das menschliche Geschlecht” ought simply to be rendered “the human race,” but this does not capture the religious and other nuances of the German in this context. The leading eighteenth-century German dictionary offers a definition of “Geschlecht” as “die von einem gemeinschaftlichen Stammvater entsprossenen Personen selbst, als ein Ganzes betrachtet, in Concreto; eine Familie. Das menschliche Geschlecht, alle Menschen, so fern sie von Adam, ihrem gemeinschaftlichen Stammvater, abstammen” (“the persons themselves sprung up from a common forefather, considered as a whole, in concrete terms; a family. The human race/lineage, all human beings, insofar as they are descended from Adam, their common forefather”).