

= Es ist das Heil uns kommen her , BWV 9 =

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her (It is our salvation come here to us) , BWV 9 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed the chorale cantata in Leipzig for the sixth Sunday after Trinity between 1732 and 1735 , based on the hymn " Es ist das Heil uns kommen her " by Paul Speratus . Bach composed the cantata to fill a gap in his cycle of chorale cantatas written for performances in Leipzig from 1724 .

The cantata is structured in seven movements , framed as the earlier chorale cantatas by a chorale fantasia and a chorale four @-@ part setting of the first and the twelfth stanza in the original words by the reformer Speratus , published in the First Lutheran Hymnal . The theme is salvation from sin by God 's grace alone . An anonymous librettist paraphrased the content of ten inner stanzas to alternating recitatives and arias . Bach scored the cantata for a chamber ensemble of four vocal parts , flauto traverso , oboe d 'amore , strings and continuo . He gave all three recitatives to the bass , like a sermon interrupted in reflection by a tenor aria with solo violin and a duet of soprano and alto with the wind instruments .

= = History and words = =

Bach composed the cantata for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity between 1732 and 1735 . It filled a gap in his second annual cycle of chorale cantatas written for performance in Leipzig . In 1724 , when he composed the cycle , he had an engagement in Köthen that Sunday , and therefore left the text for later completion . The cantata is based on a hymn " Es ist das Heil uns kommen her " by Paul Speratus , which was published in 1524 in the Achtliederbuch , the first Lutheran hymnal . The theme of the chorale is the Lutheran creed of salvation from sin by God 's grace alone (justification by faith) , summarized in the first stanza : " Deeds can never help , ... faith beholds Jesus Christ , ... He has become the Intercessor " .

The prescribed readings for the Sunday are from the Epistle to the Romans , " By Christ 's death we are dead for sin " (Romans 6 : 3 ? 11) , and from the Gospel of Matthew a passage from the Sermon on the Mount about better justice than the justice of merely observing laws and rules (Matthew 5 : 20 ? 26) . The 14 @-@ stanza hymn matches the topic of the gospel . An unknown poet transformed the first 12 stanzas of the chorale to seven cantata movements . Dropping the last two stanzas , the librettist kept stanza 1 as the first and stanza 12 as the last movement , rephrased stanzas 2 ? 4 to a recitative (2) , stanzas 5 ? 7 to a recitative (4) , stanzas 9 ? 11 to a third recitative (6) . Ideas from stanza 8 were made an aria (5) , and movement 3 is not derived directly from the chorale , but intensifies the conclusion of the first recitative . The three recitatives can be considered a sermon , according to Julian Mincham , who comments : " All three speak of God 's Laws ; their bestowal , their fulfillment (or lack of it) and our attitudes towards them " , and who summarizes : " The three recitatives were clearly planned as a cognate group and encapsulate the fundamental Lutheran creed . The two intervening arias , and finally the chorale , reflect upon and extend their statements . " Christoph Wolff assumes that the text was written for Bach 's 1724 cycle of chorale cantatas by the same librettist .

Bach had used selected stanzas of the hymn before , in 1716 stanza 12 to conclude Mein Gott , wie lang , ach lange ? BWV 155 , in 1723 both stanza 12 and 11 to conclude the two parts of Ärgre dich , o Seele , nicht , BWV 186 , and in 1724 stanza 11 to conclude Wahrlich , wahrlich , ich sage euch , BWV 86 .

= = Structure and scoring = =

Bach structured the cantata in seven movements , framing by a chorale fantasia and a closing chorale a sequence of alternating recitatives and arias . He scored it for a chamber music ensemble of four vocal soloists (soprano (S) , alto (A) , tenor (T) and bass (B)) , a four @-@ part choir SATB , flauto traverso (Ft) , oboe d 'amore (Oa) , two violins (VI) , one of them solo (Vs) , viola (Va) , and basso continuo (Bc) . The autograph title page reads : " Dominica 6 @.@ post

Trinitatis / Es ist das Heil uns kommen her / a / 4 Voci / 1 Traversa / 1 Hautb : d 'Amour / 2 Violini / Viola / e / Continuo / di / Joh : Sebast : Bach " .

In the following table of the movements , the scoring follows the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe . The keys and time signatures are taken from Alfred Dürr , using the symbol for common time (4 / 4) . The instruments are shown separately for winds and strings , while the continuo , playing throughout , is not shown .

= = Music = =

= = = 1 = = =

The opening chorus , " Es ist das Heil uns kommen her " (It is our salvation come here to us) , is a chorale fantasia , the vocal part embedded in a concerto of the instruments . The cantus firmus of the chorale melody is in the soprano in unadorned long notes , while the lower voices engage in imitation . The scoring with the obbligato instruments flute and oboe d 'amore in contrast to the strings is unusual , sometimes the first violin takes also part in the concerto .

= = = 2 = = =

" Gott gab uns ein Gesetz " (God gave us the Law) , is the first of three recitatives which are sung by the bass as the vox Christi (voice of Christ) , almost like one sermon , which is only deepened by the two arias in between . The recitatives are secco with the only exception of the final line of movement 4 , " ... und fest um Jesu Arme schlingt " (... embrace the arms of Jesus) , which is rendered arioso , in " an enlightening major key , a tender vocal phrase and the late semi @-@ quaver continuo line " .

= = = 3 = = =

The tenor aria depicts the " sinking " of " Wir waren schon zu tief gesunken " (We were already too deeply sunk) in downward motifs and an irregular rhythm of syncopes , observed by Dürr as an image of " a giddy descent into the abyss of sin " .

= = = 4 = = =

The bass continues the " sermon " , " Doch mußte das Gesetz erfüllet werden " (Yet the Law must be fulfilled) .

= = = 5 = = =

The duet " Herr , du siehst statt guter Werke " (Lord , you see , instead of good works) is set for five parts of equal weight , the soprano and alto voices , flute , oboe d 'amore and continuo , in intricate canonic counterpoint in da capo form .

= = = 6 = = =

The bass continues the " sermon " a third time , " Wenn wir die Sünd aus dem Gesetz erkennen " (When we recognize our sin against the Law) .

= = = 7 = = =

The closing chorale , " Ob sichs anließ , als wollt er nicht " (Although it appears that He does not will it) , is set for four parts . While Bach 's closing chorales are often in simple homophony , the

lower voices are set here in unusual polyphony .

= = Selected recordings = =

The sortable listing is taken from the selection provided by Aryeh Oron on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website . Recordings have traditionally been made by large symphonic groups (Bach choir and orchestra) , but increasingly in historically informed performances by boys ' choirs , chorales (Kantorei , choir dedicated to mostly church music) , chamber choirs or groups with one voice per part (OVPP) , and matching instrumental ensembles playing on Baroque period instruments in historically informed performance .