



A Passion for People

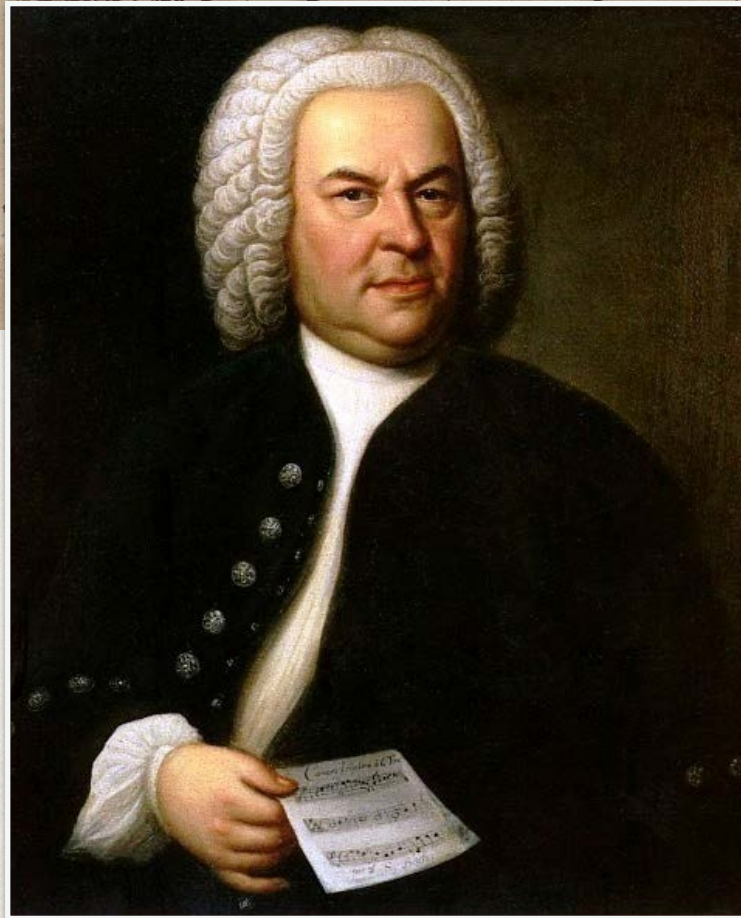
**Bach's Musical Masterpiece
brings Jesus' Death to Life**

*2024 WELS Worship Conference
Kenosha, Wisconsin*

*Pastor Mark Tiefel,
New London WI*

What is this “Passion?”

- ❖ *A masterpiece of music history*
- ❖ *A master stroke of Lutheran worship*
- ❖ *A master class in pastoral care*



Who are these “people?”

- ❖ Grew up in a musical family..
- ❖ Not a trained scholar of Bach, musicology, harmonic analysis, German language, baroque history....
- ❖ An appreciation for “practical history” and the partnership of “musicians and theologians”



Johann Sebastian Bach



Prelude:

“Herr, Unser Herrscher”

The Setting of the St. John Passion

Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Man of Sorrows” (no. 1)





“A well-read, highly principled musician”

- ❖ Bach's St. John's Passion premieres on April 7, 1724 - Johann S. Bach has held his position for less than a year
- ❖ Bach is responsible for music at four Lutheran churches & a large school
- ❖ Johann is a 39-year old remarried father of six. Two are his students
- ❖ Easter marks of a 'silent' Lenten season. He uses the time for composition.

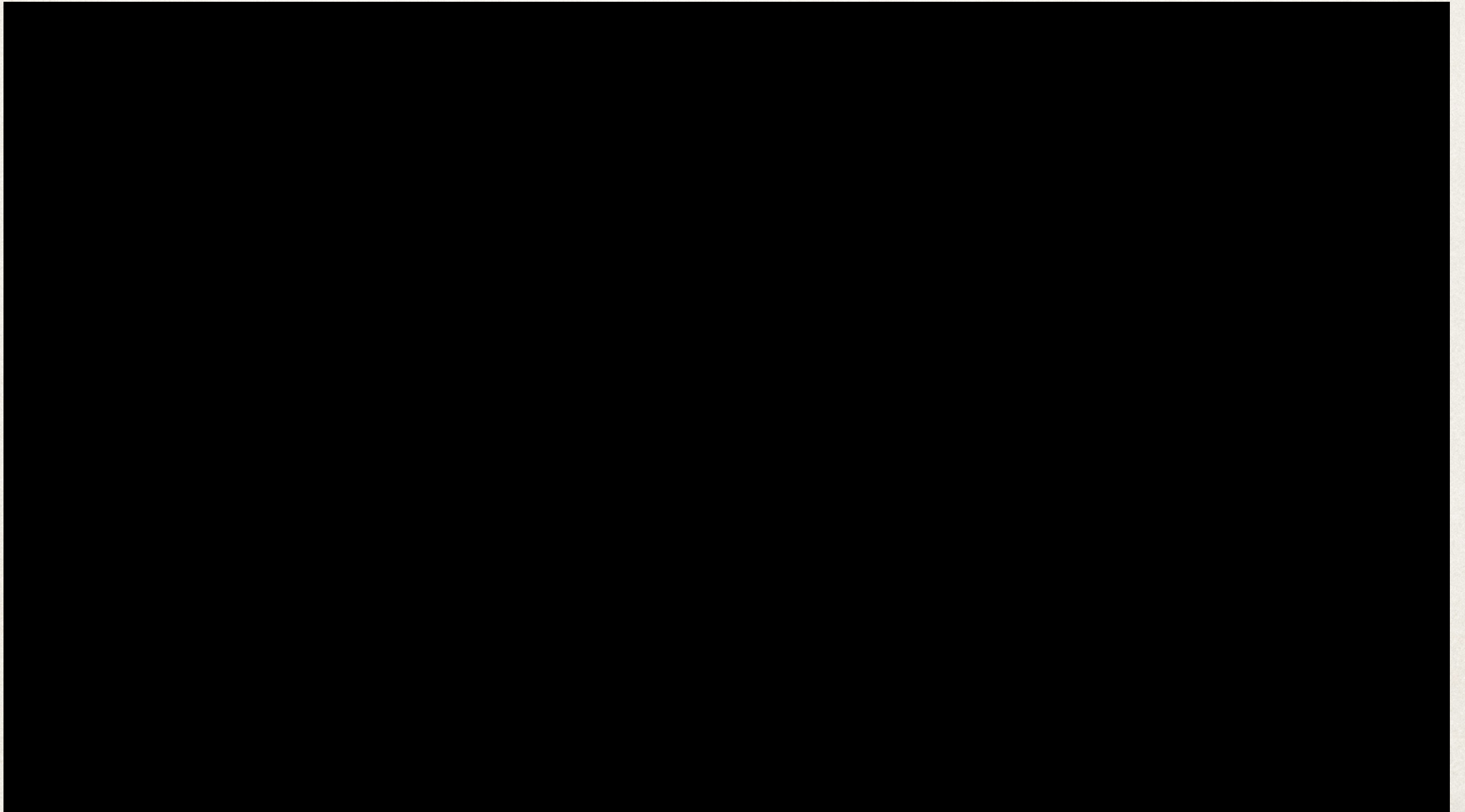


A “well-tempered” passion setting...

- ❖ Predominant usage of ‘recitative’ Scriptural texts
- ❖ Compelling usage of well-known Lutheran chorales
- ❖ Reflective usage of newly-composed poetic libretto
- ❖ Dramatic use of “turba choruses” and instrumentation



1. “Herr, unser Herrscher”



Part One:

“Wen Suchet Ihr?”

The Scripture of the St. John Passion

Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Betrayal of Christ” (no. 3)





Eyn Sermon von der Betrachtung des
heiligen lebenden Christi. D.
Martini Luther zu
Wittenberg.

Bedruckt zu Wittenberg.

ner Schnur (der
) Scham nicht
eines Sohnes
eines Sohnes Ehe-
wesen/) darum
löffen. (I. Mos
nes Brudern
t/ oder sich von
löffen/ denn
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*Ms. Disjunctum dem
Johann (so da antwortet)
in dem Evangelium
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Scripture provides the structural foundation

❖ Bach employed a considerable “homiletic” understanding.

❖ Bach was able to compose a dramatic retelling of John’s gospel powerful enough to ‘stand on its own’

❖ Bach was willing to provide ‘sermon notes’ to keep his audience engaged.

ORATORIUM,
Welches
Die heilige ~~W~~enbnacht
über
In beyden
Haupt-Kirchen
zu Leipzig
musiciret wurde.
ANNO 1734.

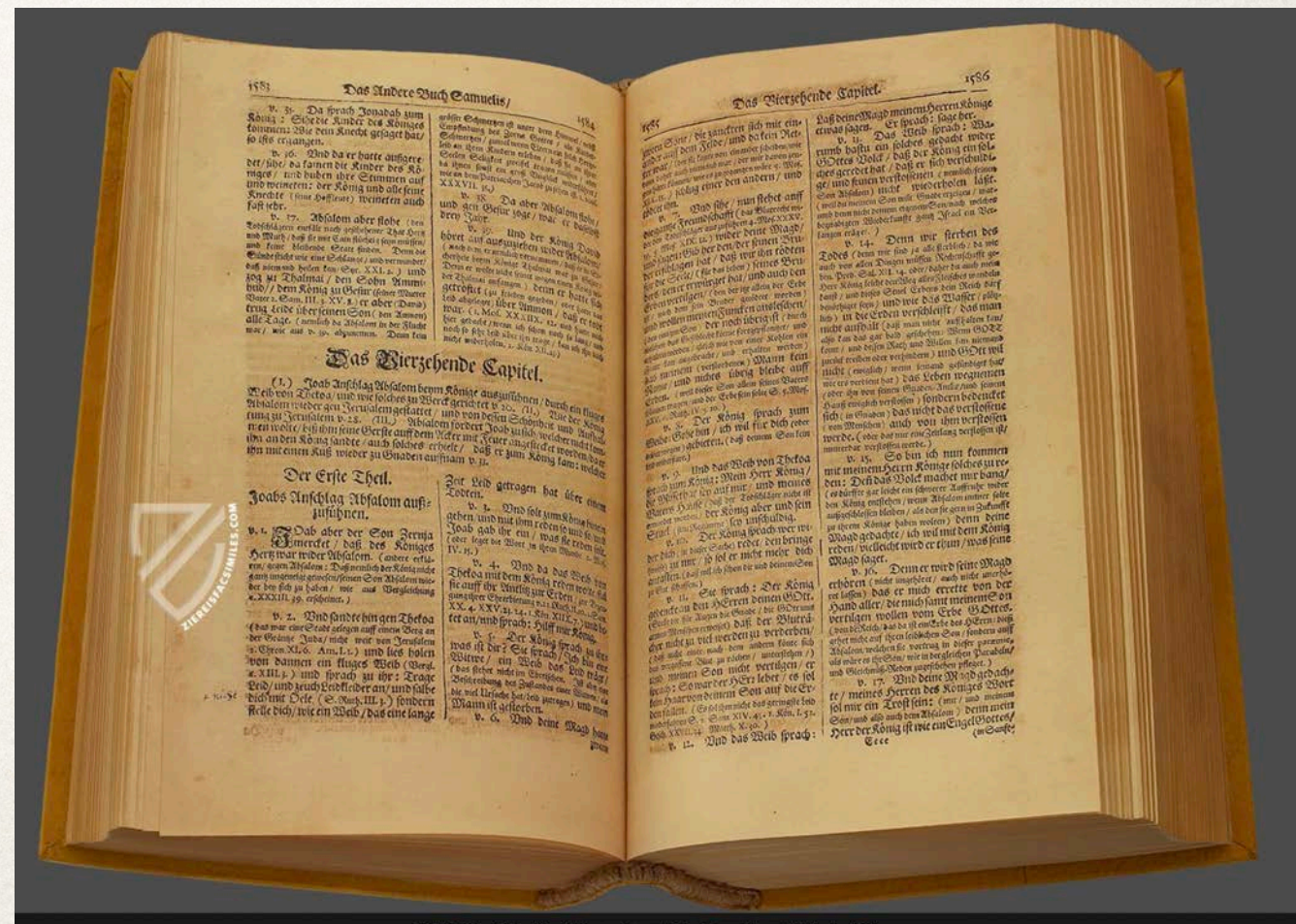
Aufs Fest der Beschneidung Christi.
Frühe zu St. Thomæ; Nachmittage zu St. Nicolai.

Tutti.
Stellt mit Danken, fällt mit Lo-
ben
Vor des Höchsten Gnaden-Thron.
Gottes Sohn
Will auf Erden
Unser aller Heyland werden,
Gottes Sohn
Dämpfft der Hölle Wuth und Toben.
Da Capo.

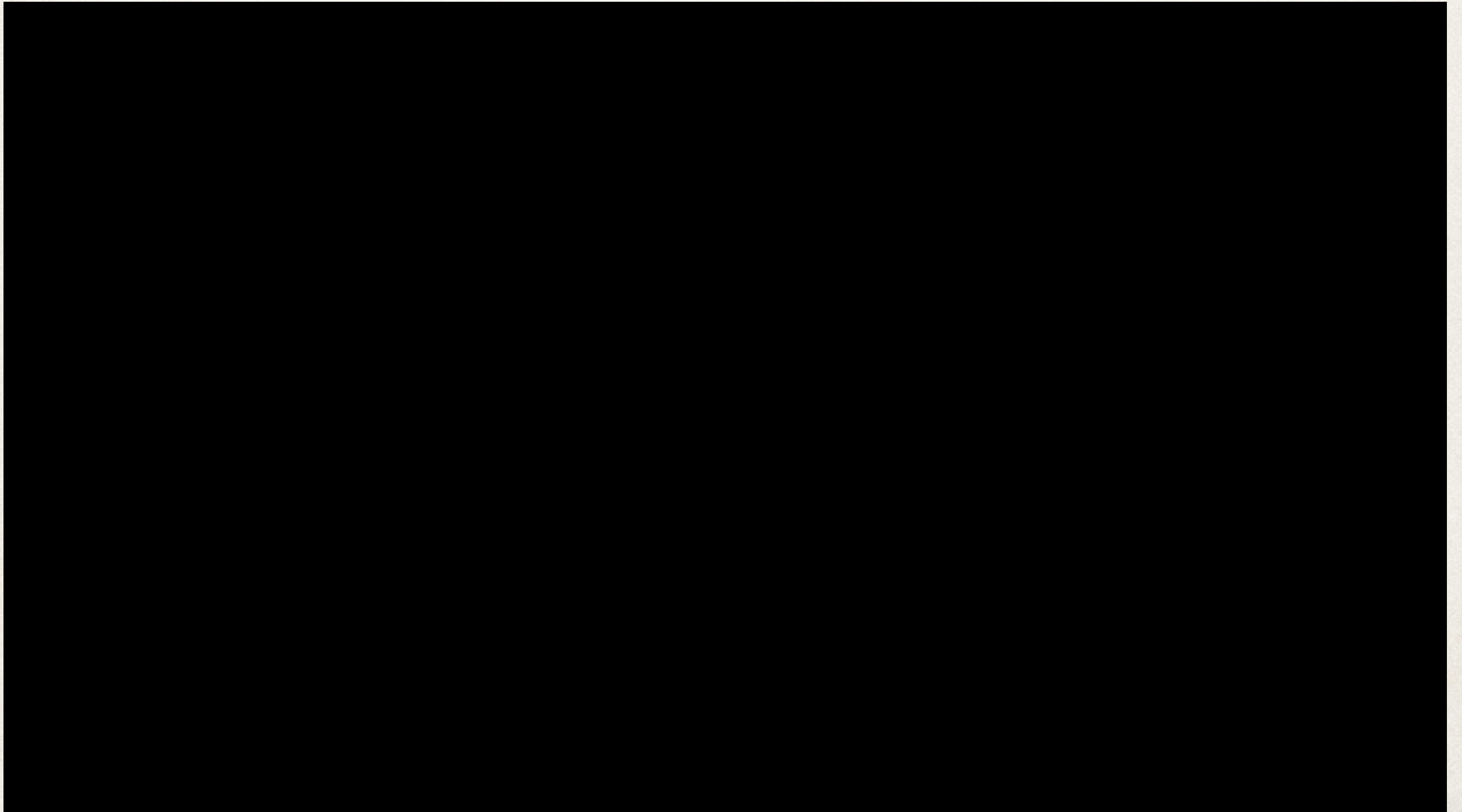
Evangelist.
Und da acht Tage um waren,
daß das Kind beschnitten wurde,
da ward sein Nahme genennet, Je-
sus, welcher genennet war von dem
Engel, ehe denn er im Mutterleibe
empfangen ward.

Recit.
Immanuel, o süßes Wort!
Wein Jesus heißt mein Dorn.

Mein



2. *Recit.* John 18:1-8.



Part Two:

“Wer hat dich so geschlagen?”

The Chorales of the St. John Passion

Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Christ before Caiphas” (no. 4)



einem Schwur ihm das verbiess / Der nur sprach
dencke. Denck o Mensch / und bitte Gott / Daß
dencke / In so vielfältiger Noth / Linderung dir sch

22. Unglück dem das Leben bracht / Der schon
lohren / Und hieran wohl nie gedacht / Wird von
lohren: Deine Kuchen / lieber Job / Dir nicht wen
Können dich zu deinem Lob / Mit Christo versühn

23. Mein Gott / mein Gott / Jesus rieff / Wie b
lassen / Fühle in der Angst so tieff / Leiden ohne Maß
auch du / Wenn Noth ist da / Gott an / deinen He
will dennoch dir seyn nah / Ob er gleich scheint fern

24. Jesu gab man bitter Gall / Unserm Lebens
Der da ist mein einig all / Muß für Armuth dürst
sus / wenn ich leide Noth / Will mit dir ich leiden /
mag bey dir / o Gott / Bleiben ungescheiden.

25. Jesus alles hat vollbracht / Was nur von
ten / Lange vorher ist gesagt / Nichts mehr ist vor
Weinenicht / nur Christi Werck / Haben alls
Wenn der Trost mich nicht gestärckt / Wär ich l
dorben.

26. Vater / Jesus allermeist / Rieff an seinem
befehle meinen Geist Dir in deine Hände: Me
le meinem Gott Wil ich stets befehlen / O da wir
Noth / Nimmermehr mehr quälen.

27. Als geschehen war die Bitt / Jesus sein
get / Hanget am Holz so verschied / Seine Knie beu
ren will er deine Wort / Rüssen seine Erlösten / Se
ter loben dort / Die sich seiner trösten.

28. Finsternis die ganze Welt Decket / das
Auch die harten Felsen spält / Tode sich erheben;
todter Jesus nun Solches thun iekunder / Wie
wird er denn thun / Herrschend grosse Wunder.

29. Jesus ist ein frommer Mann / Gottes



Erklärung

der

Historie des Leidens und Sterbens

unsers Herrn Christi Jesu

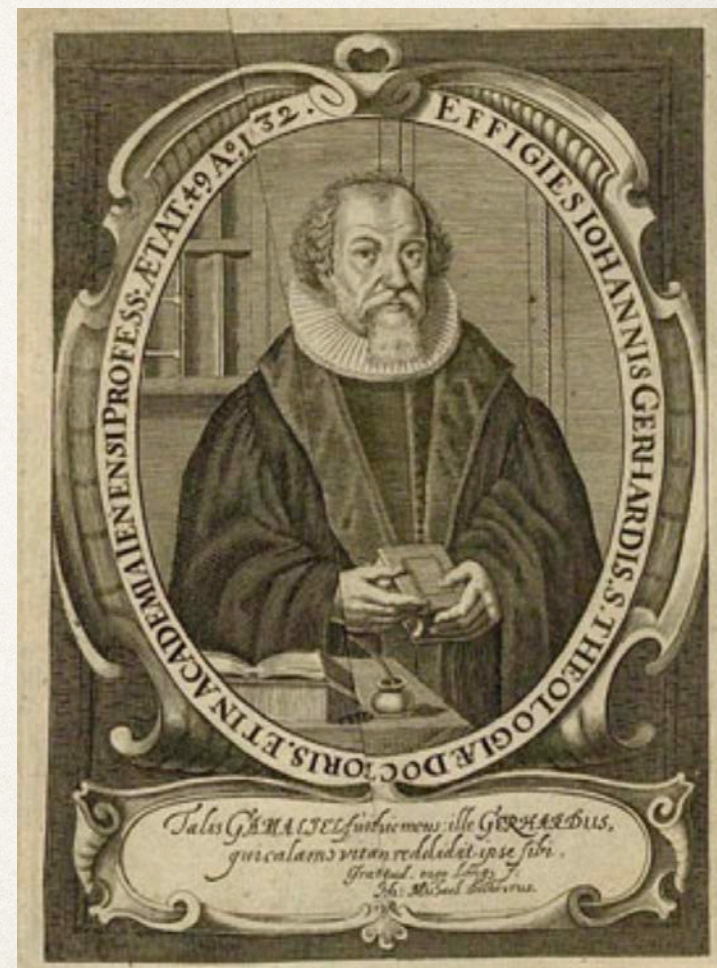
nach den vier Evangelisten also angesetzt

daß wir dadurch zur Erkenntnis der Liebe Christi erwecket werden
und am innerlichen Menschen seliglich zunehmen mögen.

Verfasset durch

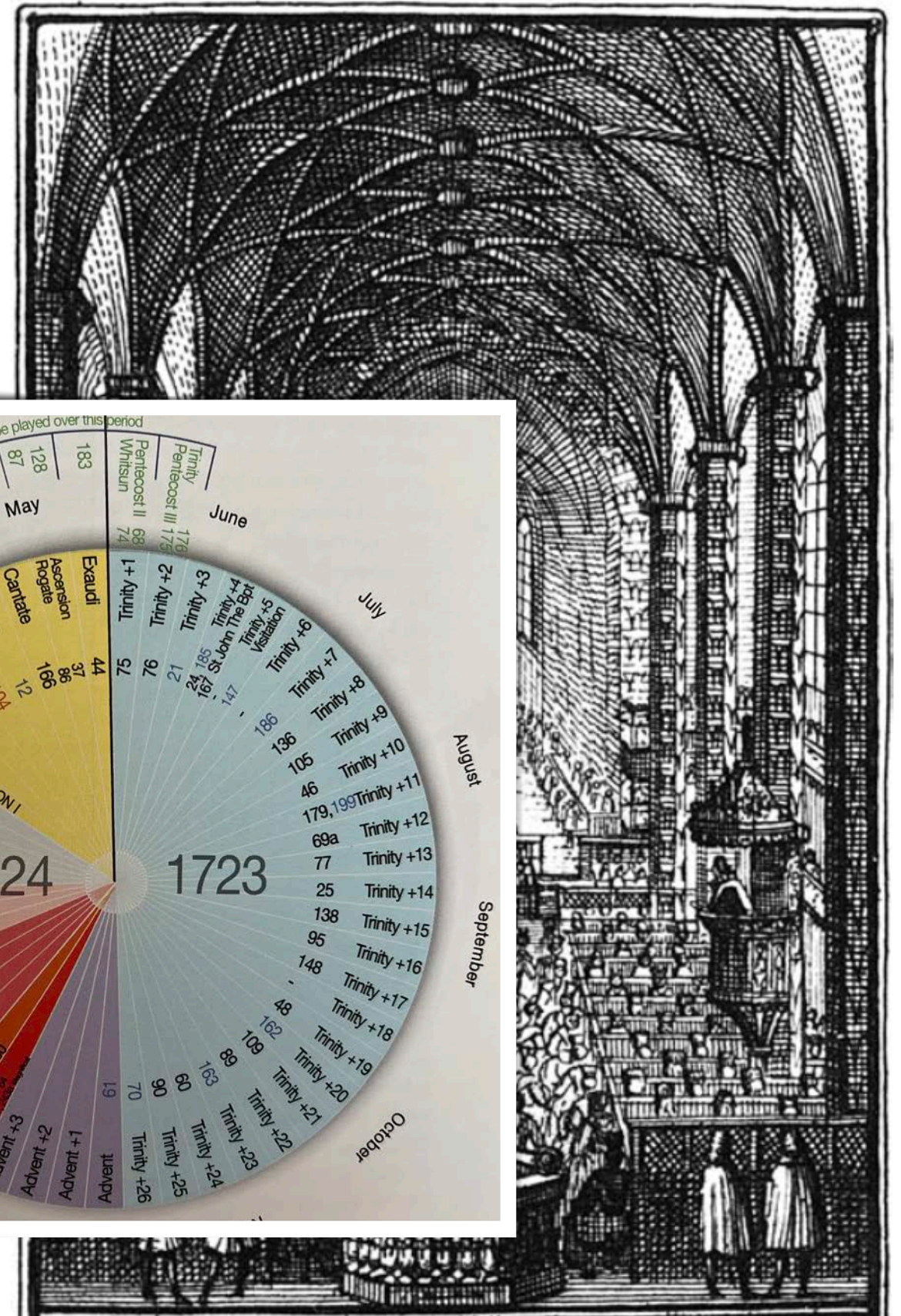
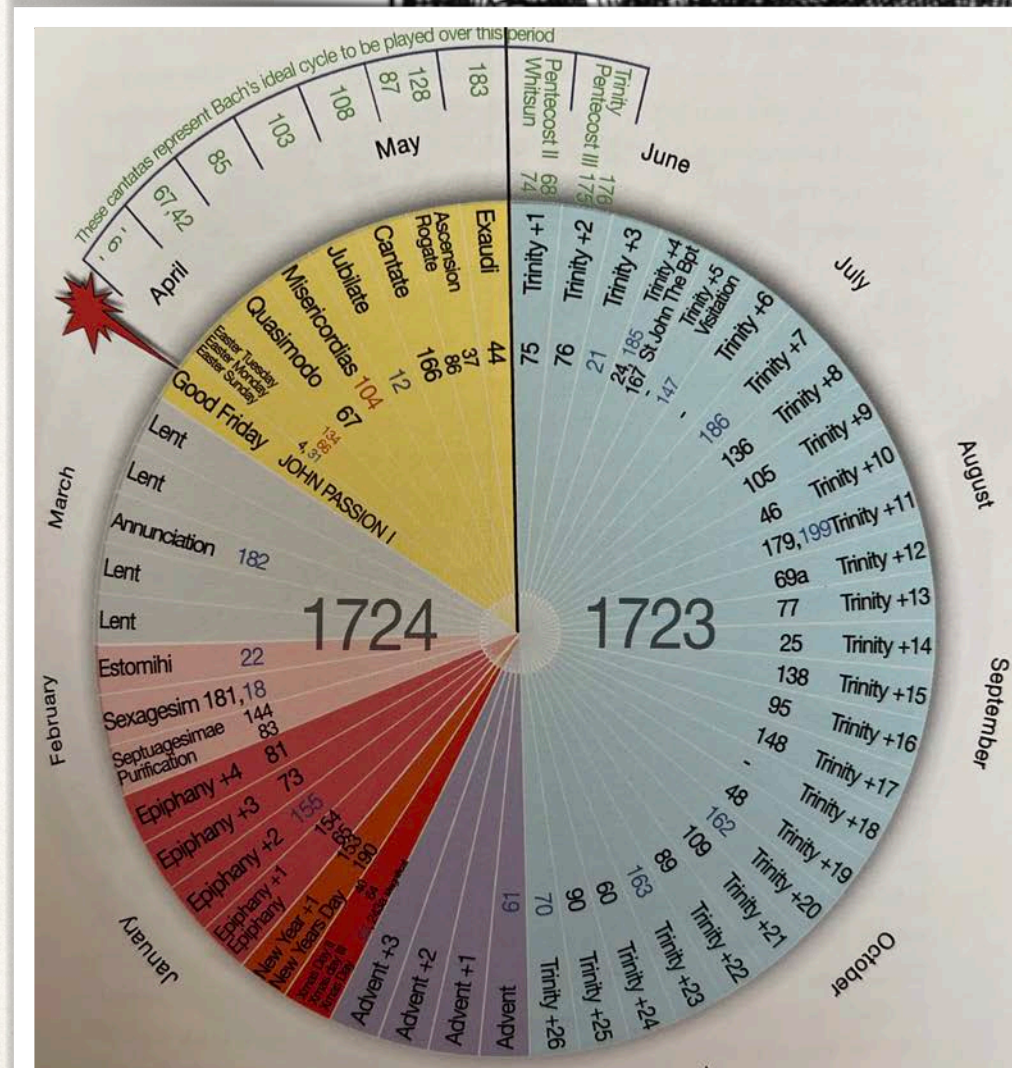
Johann Gerhard

weil. Doctor der Heiligen Schrift und Professor an der Universität Jena.

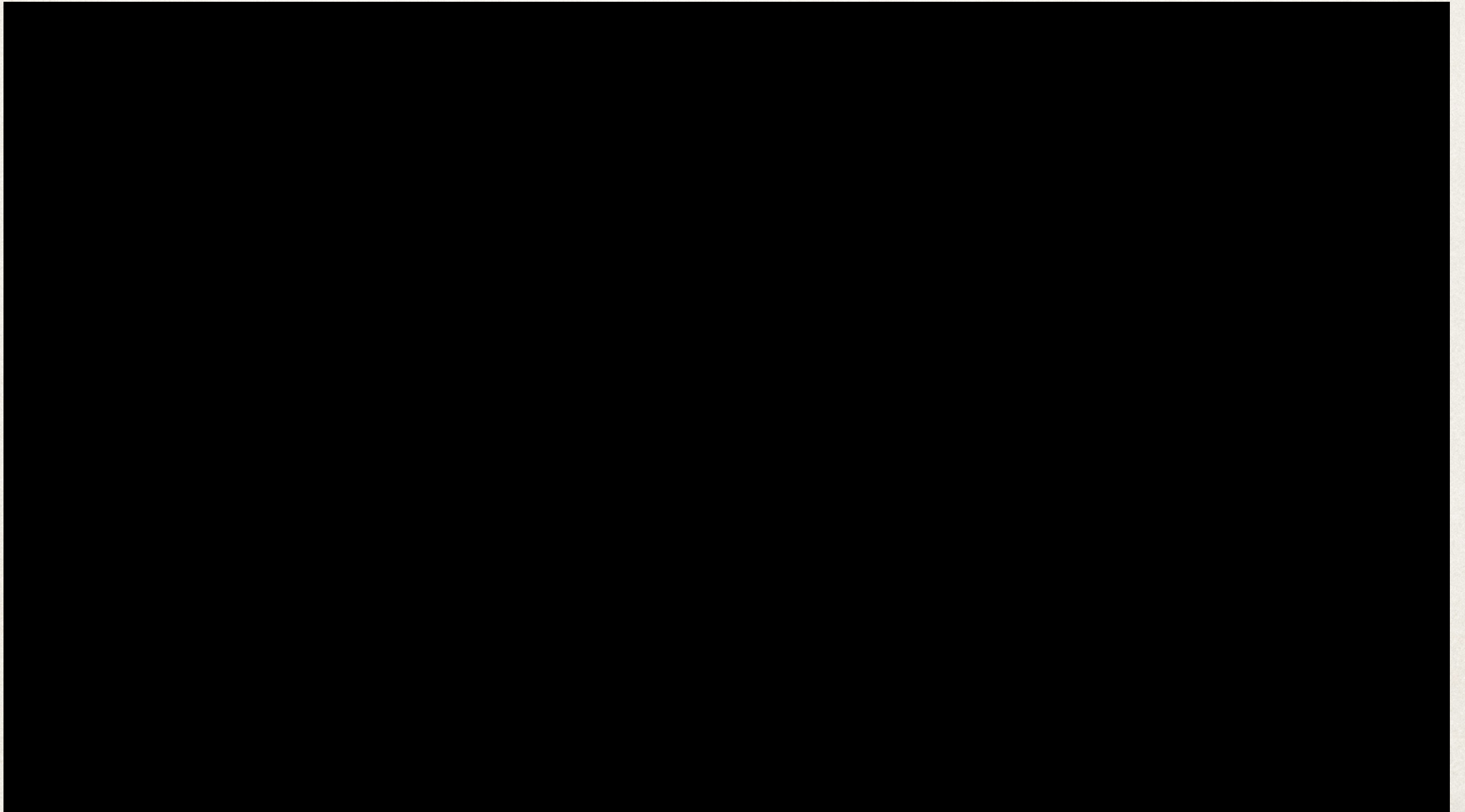


Chorales provide the contemporary connection

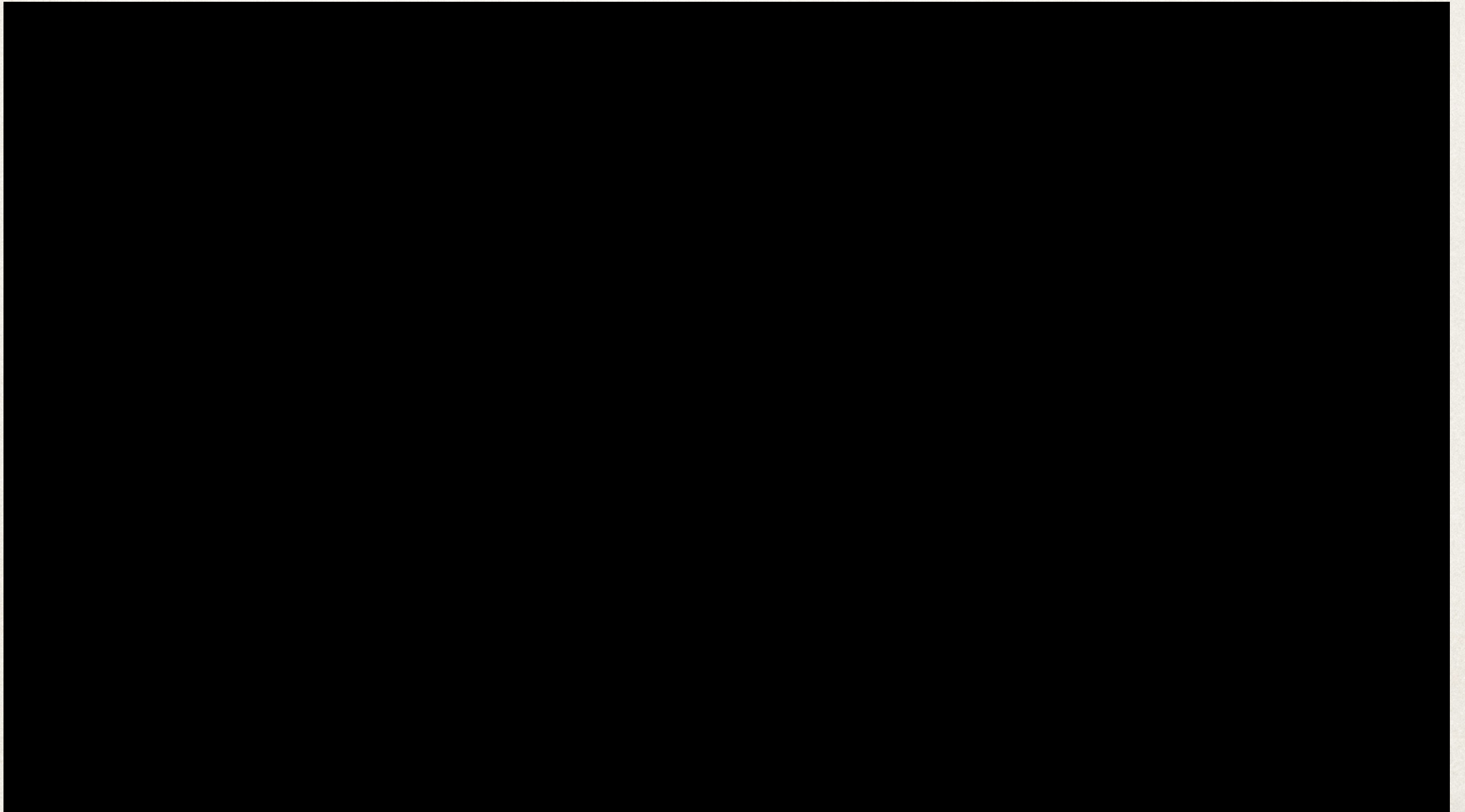
- ❖ Bach spends considerable time returning to a thematic “passion chorale”
- ❖ Bach punctuates each act of the biblical story with a “summative statement”
- ❖ Bach is engaging his church in a systematic tour of Lutheran hymns



11. “Wer hat dich so geschlagen?”



14. “Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück”



Part three:

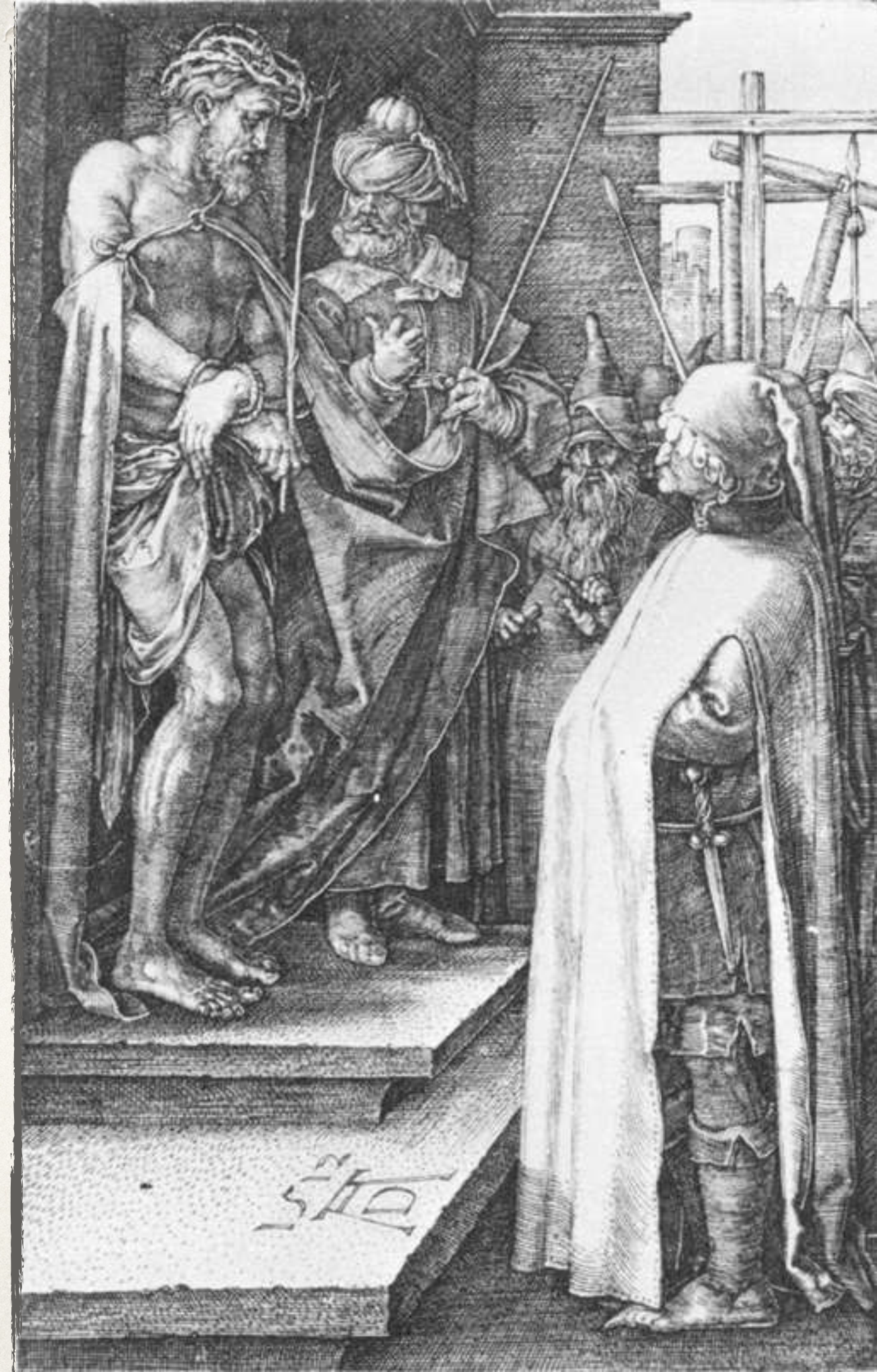
“Betrachte, meine Seel...”

The Poetry of the St. John Passion

Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Ecce Homo” (no. 8)



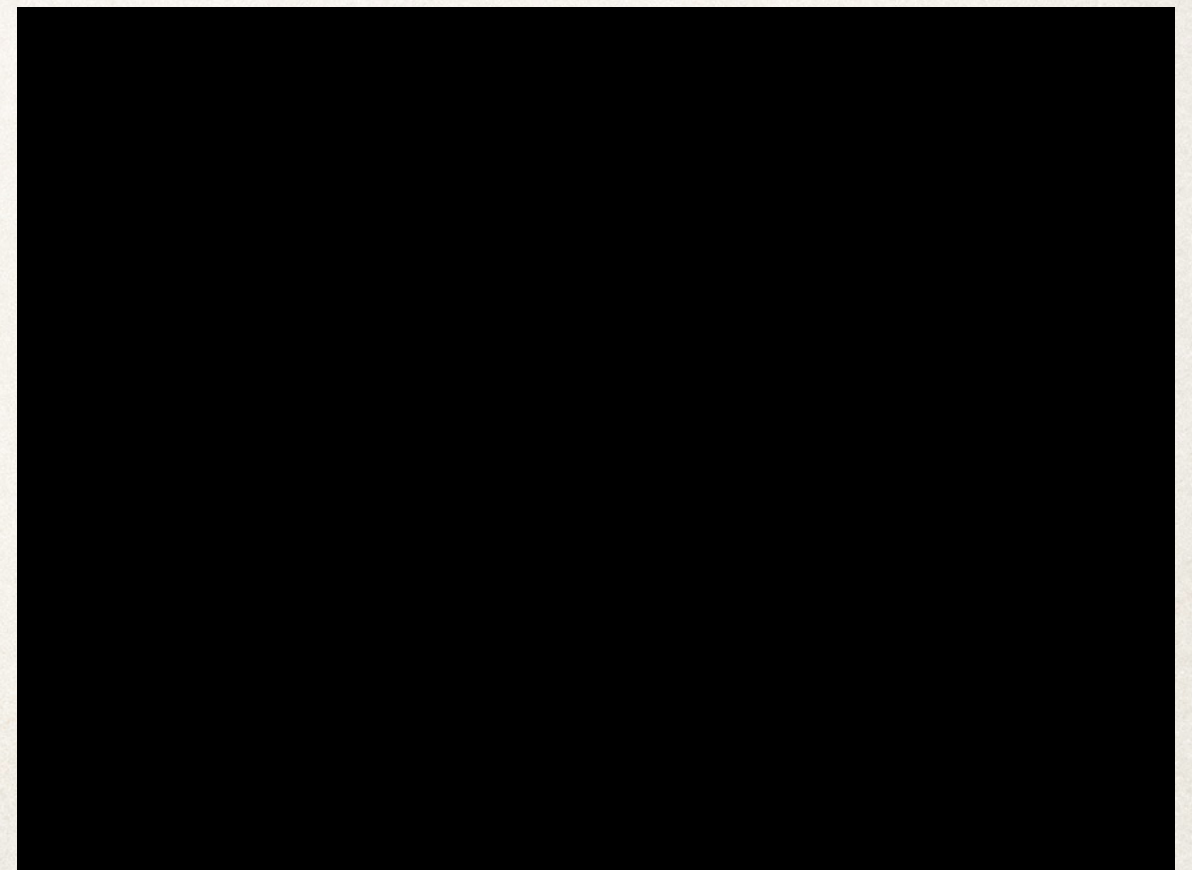
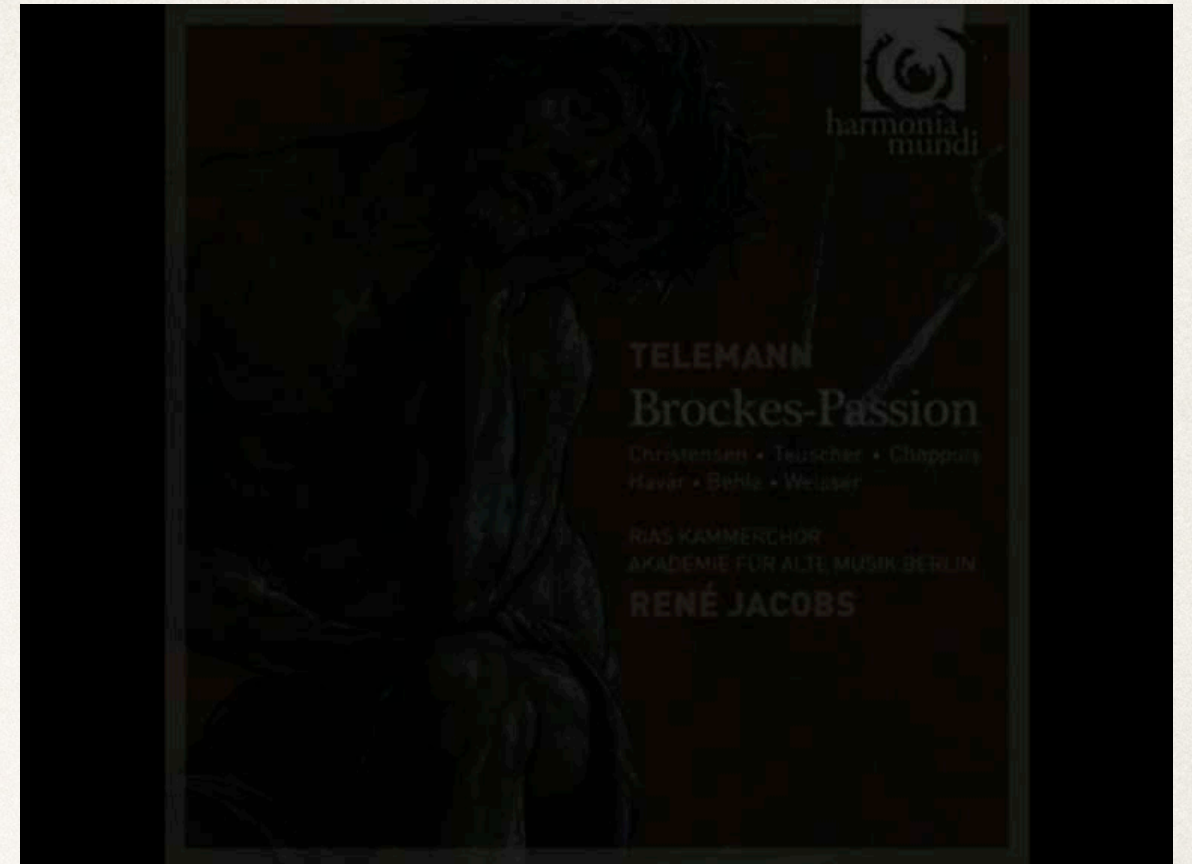


Der
Für die Sünde der Welt/
Gemarterte und Sterbende
ISMS/
Aus
Den IV. Evangelisten
In gebundener Rede vorgestellt/
Und
In der stillen Woche in des
Herrn Verfassers Behausung musi-
calisch aufgeführt/
Im Jahr 1712.



Brockes' Passion: *Contemporary Settings*

- ❖ Prominent composers produce oratorios on “*Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus*” including:
 - Reinhold Keiser (Hamburg, 1712)
 - Georg Telemann (Frankfurt, 1716)
 - Georg Handel (Hamburg, 1719)
 - Johann Fasch (Zerbst, 1723)
- ❖ Biblical text is adapted into aria and soliloquy



Poetry provides a personal reflection

- ❖ Bach adopts fewer than a dozen madrigalic texts, and is careful to adapt each one of them.
- ❖ Bach often engages arias in “dialogue,” provides “questions and answers,” and supports free poetry with “firm canticles”
- ❖ Bach’s use of poetry most often speaks to commitment and the theology of the cross

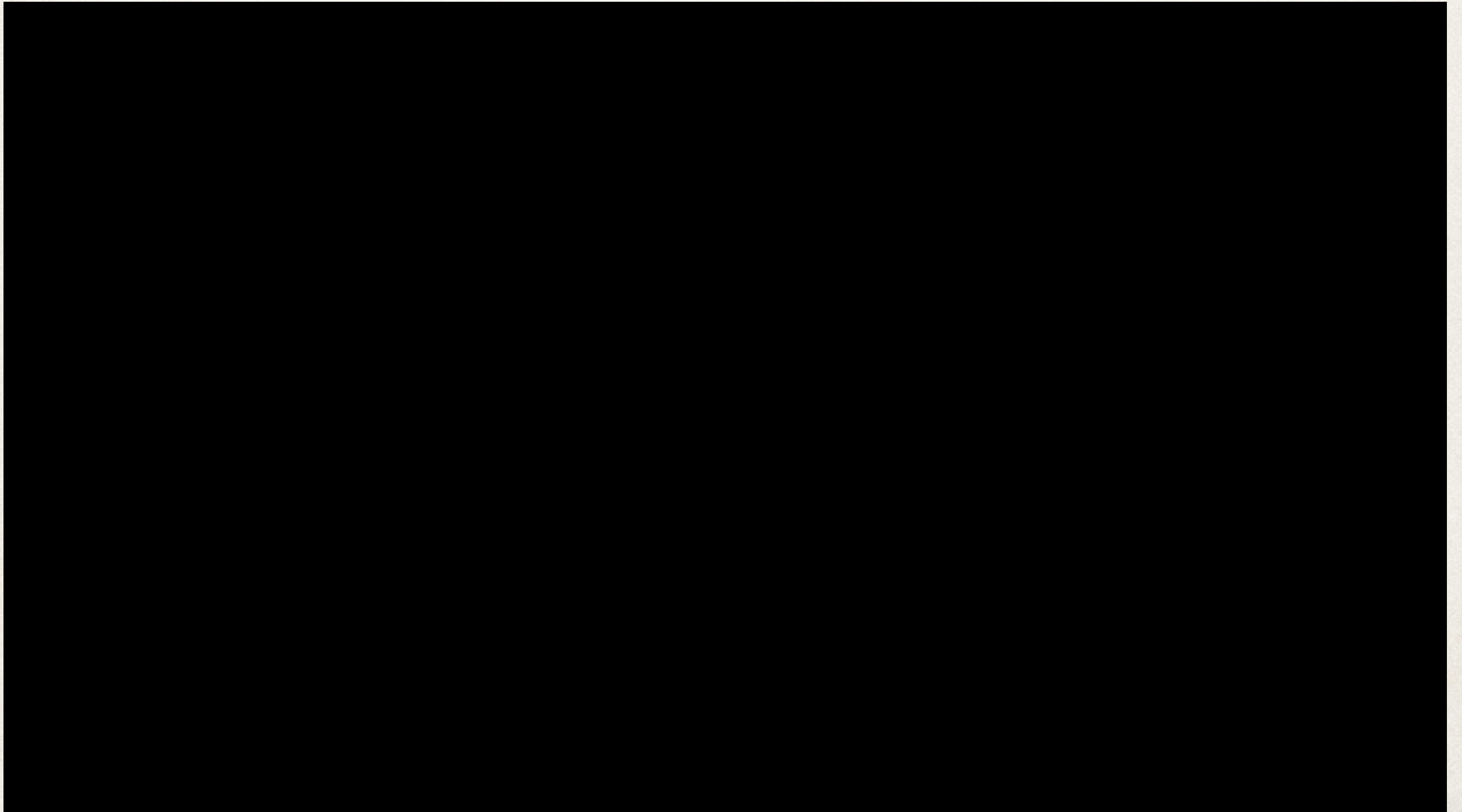


Abb. 9.1: Heinrich Müller, Geistlicher Danck=Altar, Frankfurt a. M. 1670
(Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel Th 1833), neben S. 352

19. “Betrachte, meine Seel”



24. “Eilt, ihr angefochten Seelen”



Part four:

“Jesu der du warest Tod”

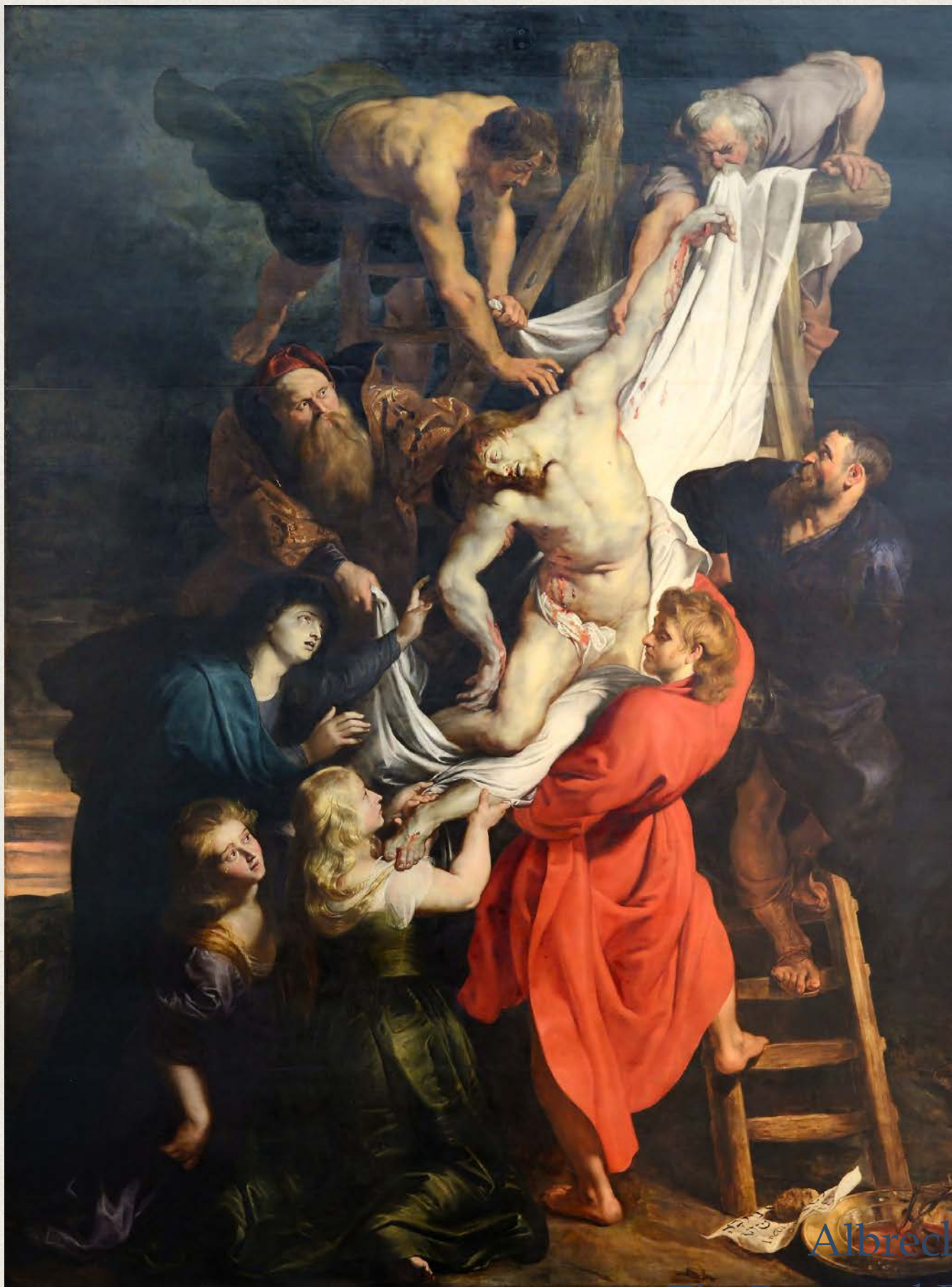
The Drama of the St. John Passion

Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Crucifixion” (no. 11)





Albrecht Durer:

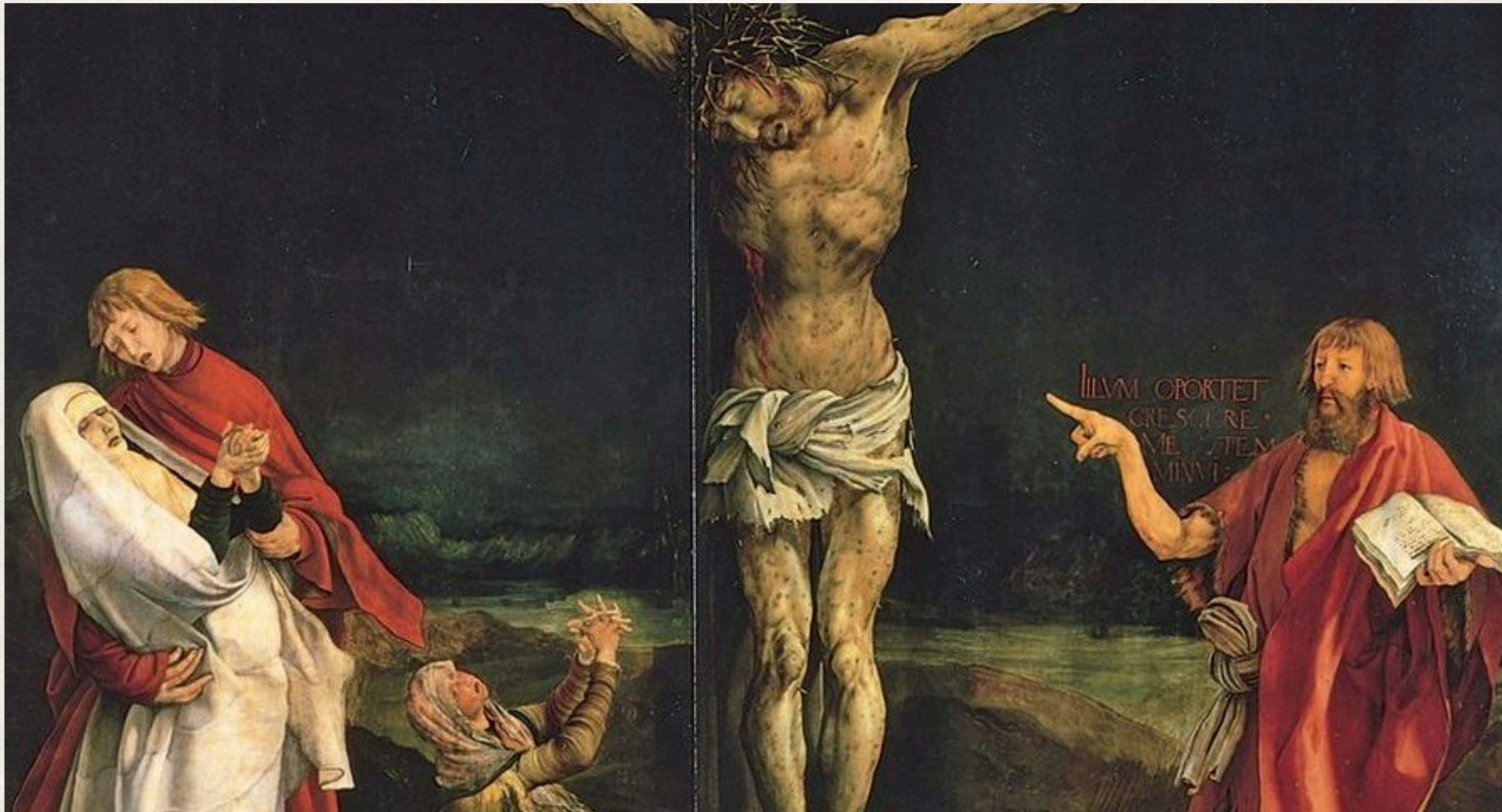
The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

Rubens, *Descent from the Cross* (1614)

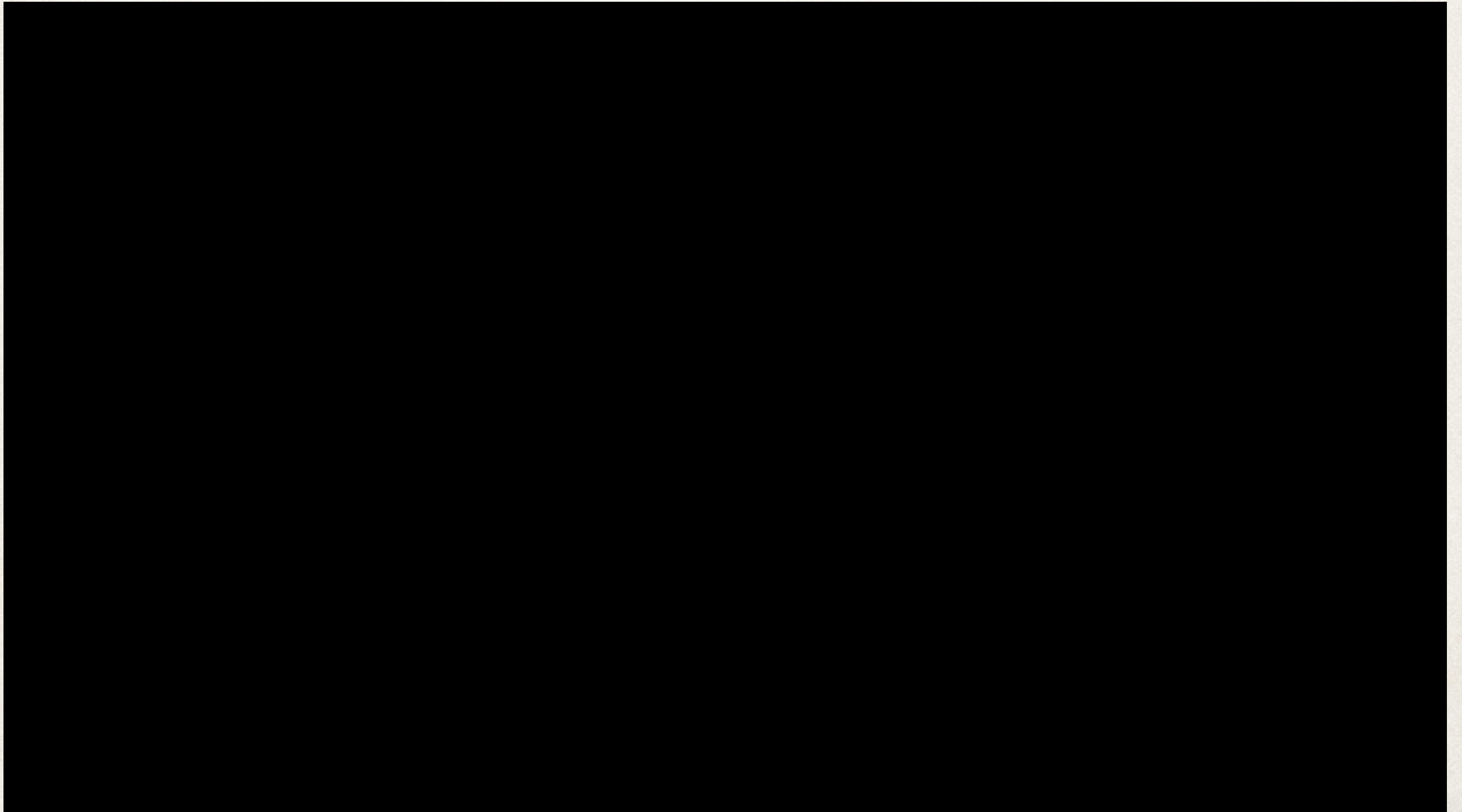
Rembrandt, *Descent from the Cross* (1634)

"Ecce Homo" (no. 8)

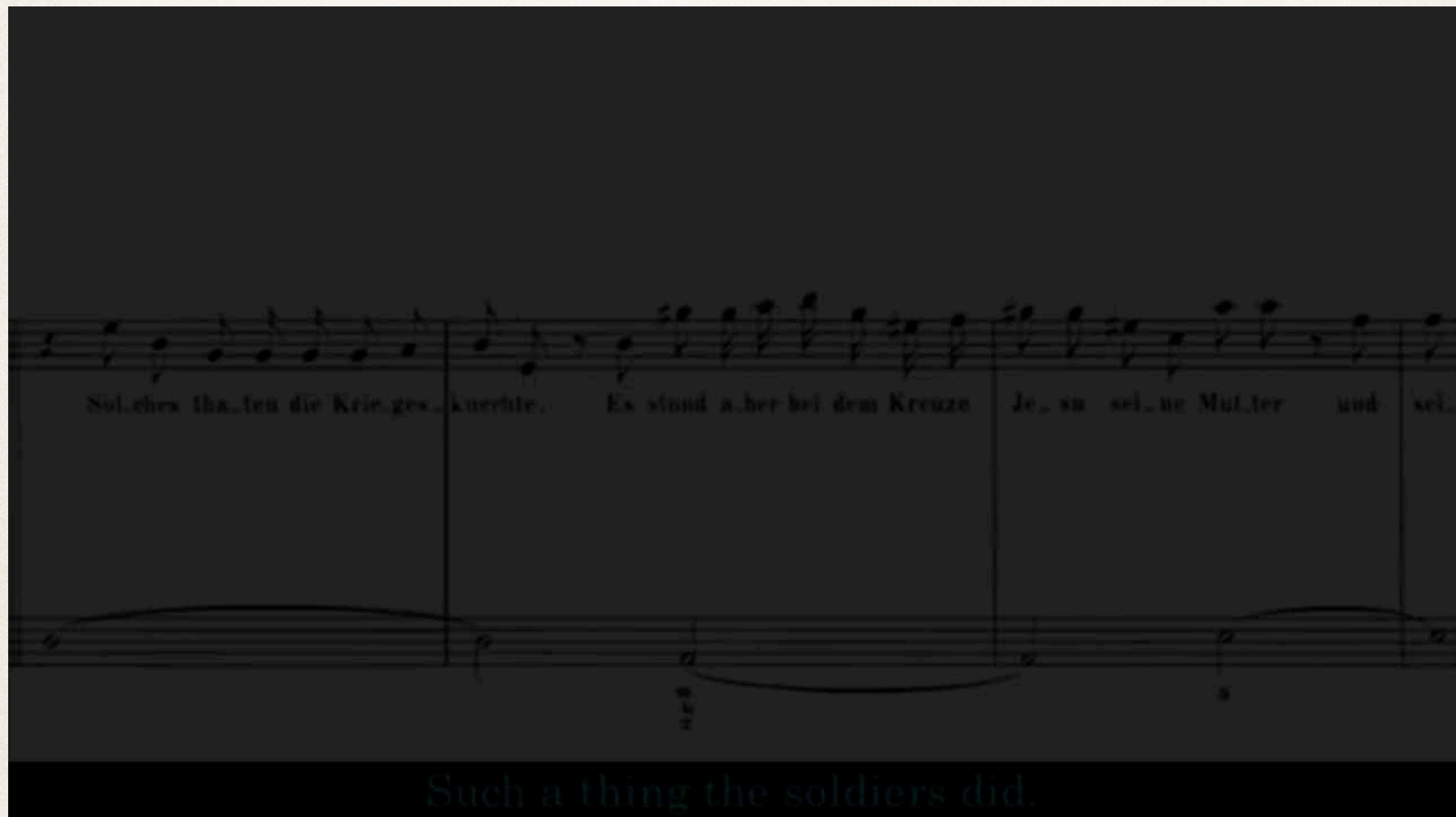
*Drama is consistently
directed “extra nos”*



18. *Turba*: John 19:1



28. Er nahm alles wohl in acht



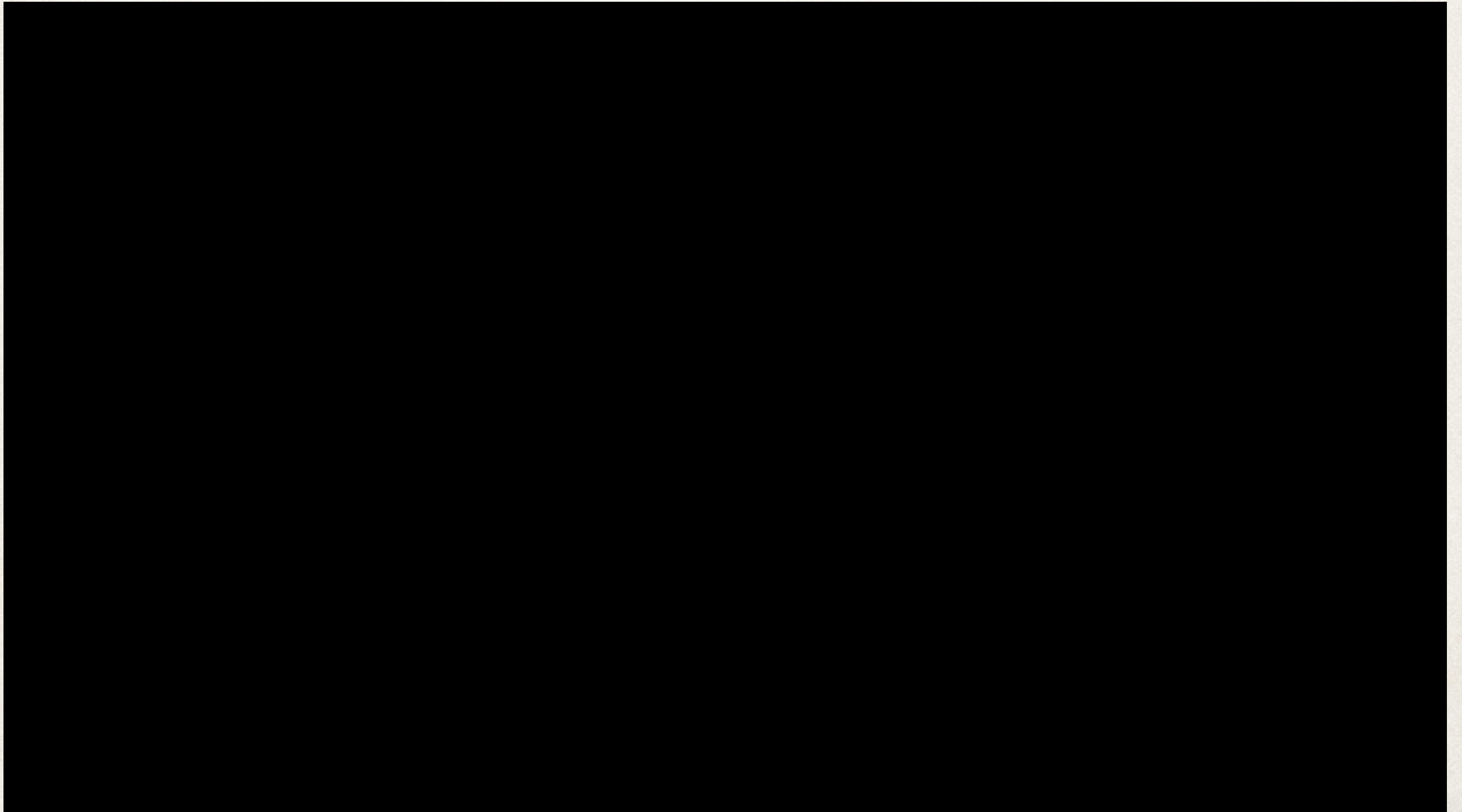
Such a thing the soldiers did.

Ein solches thaten die Krieges-knechte. Es stand aber bei dem Kreuze Je-su sei-ne Mut-ter und sei-

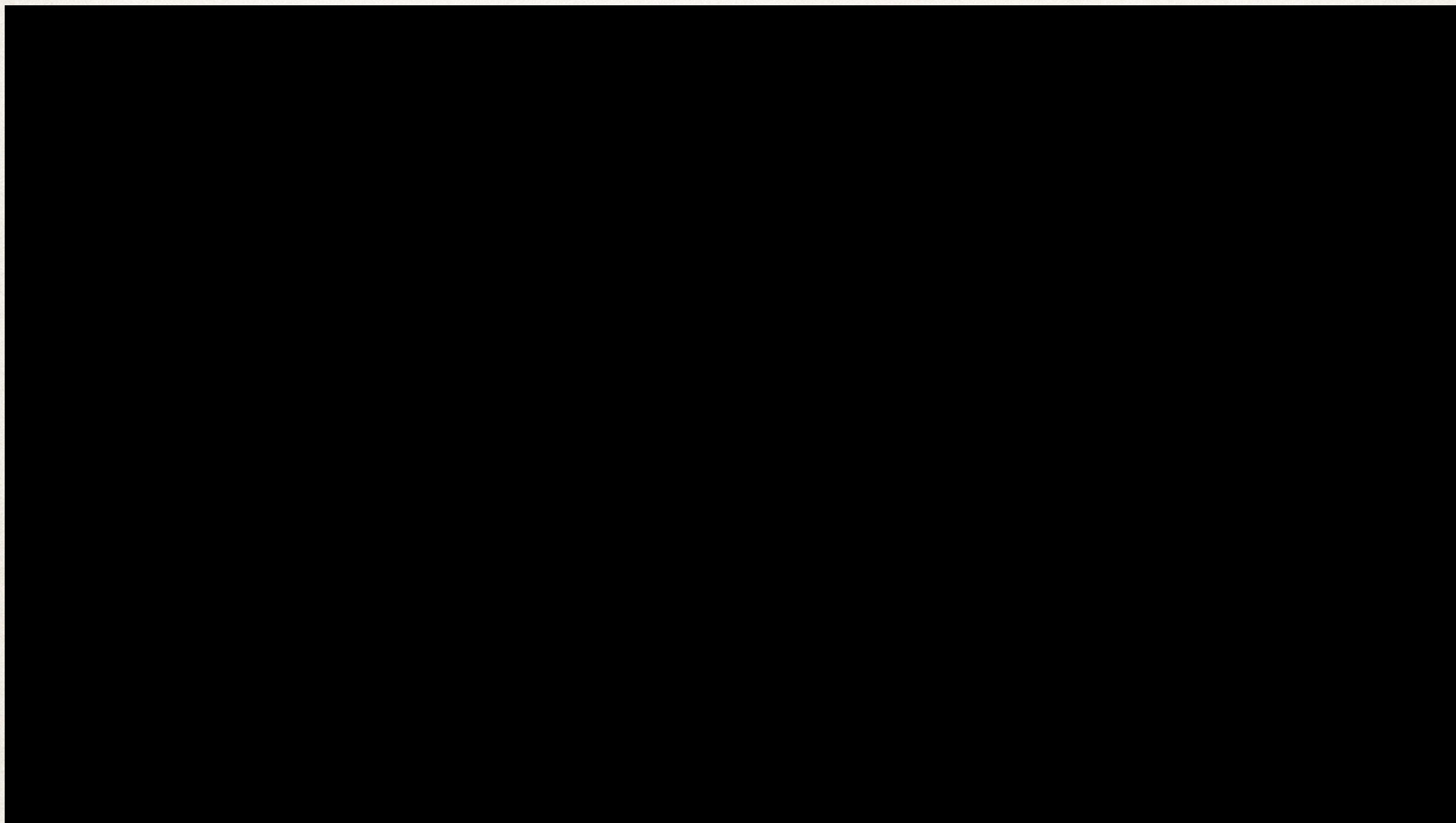
Such a thing the soldiers did.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It features a single melodic line on a five-line staff. The music is written in a style typical of 19th-century hymnals, with notes and rests. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in German and English. The German lyrics are: 'Ein solches thaten die Krieges-knechte. Es stand aber bei dem Kreuze Je-su sei-ne Mut-ter und sei-'. The English lyrics are: 'Such a thing the soldiers did.' The image is dark, with the text and music appearing in a lighter color.

23. *Turba*: John 19:14-16



32. Mein teurer Heiland



Postlude:

“Ruht wohl, ihr heilige gebeine...”

The Legacy of the St. John Passion

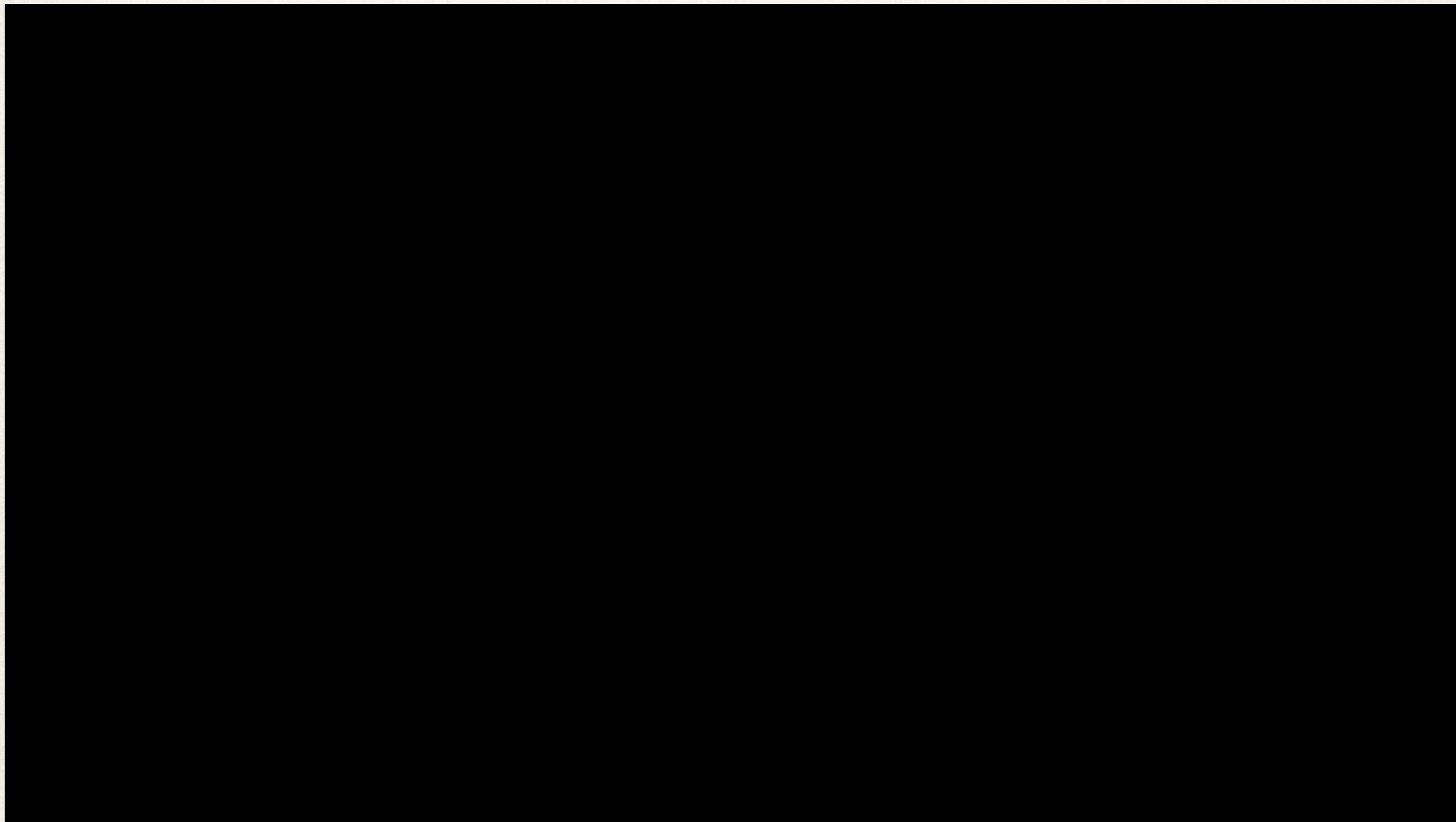
Albrecht Durer:

The Engraved Passion (1507-12)

“Deposition” (no. 13)

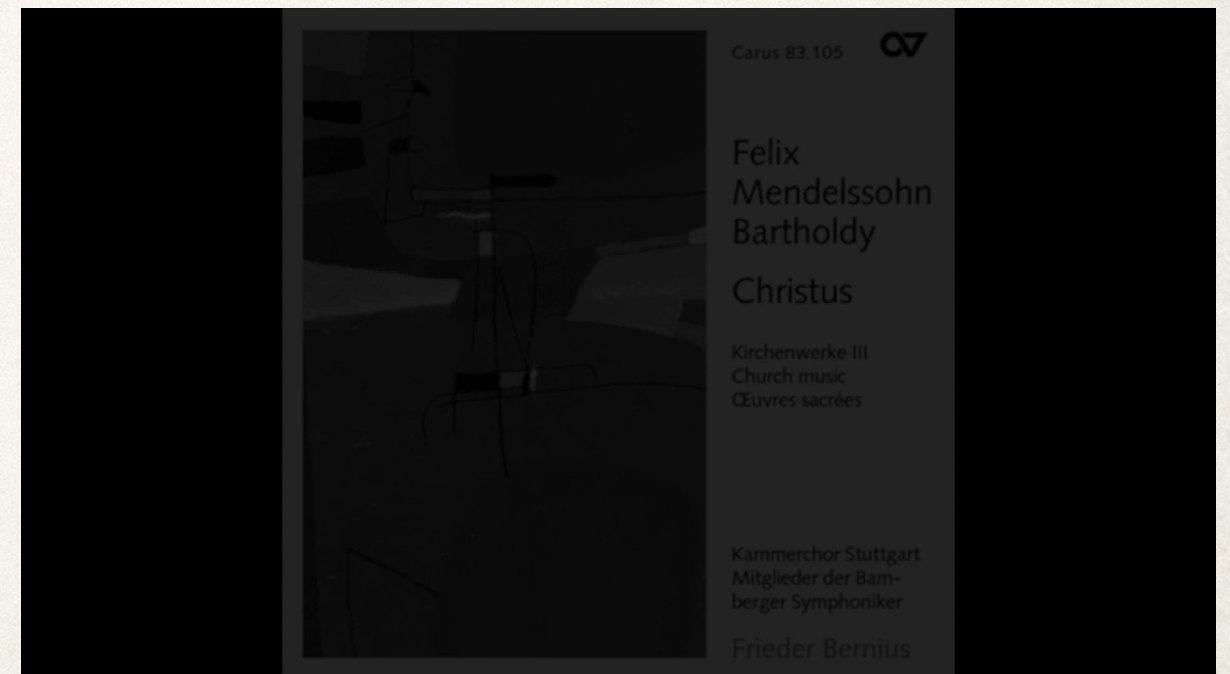
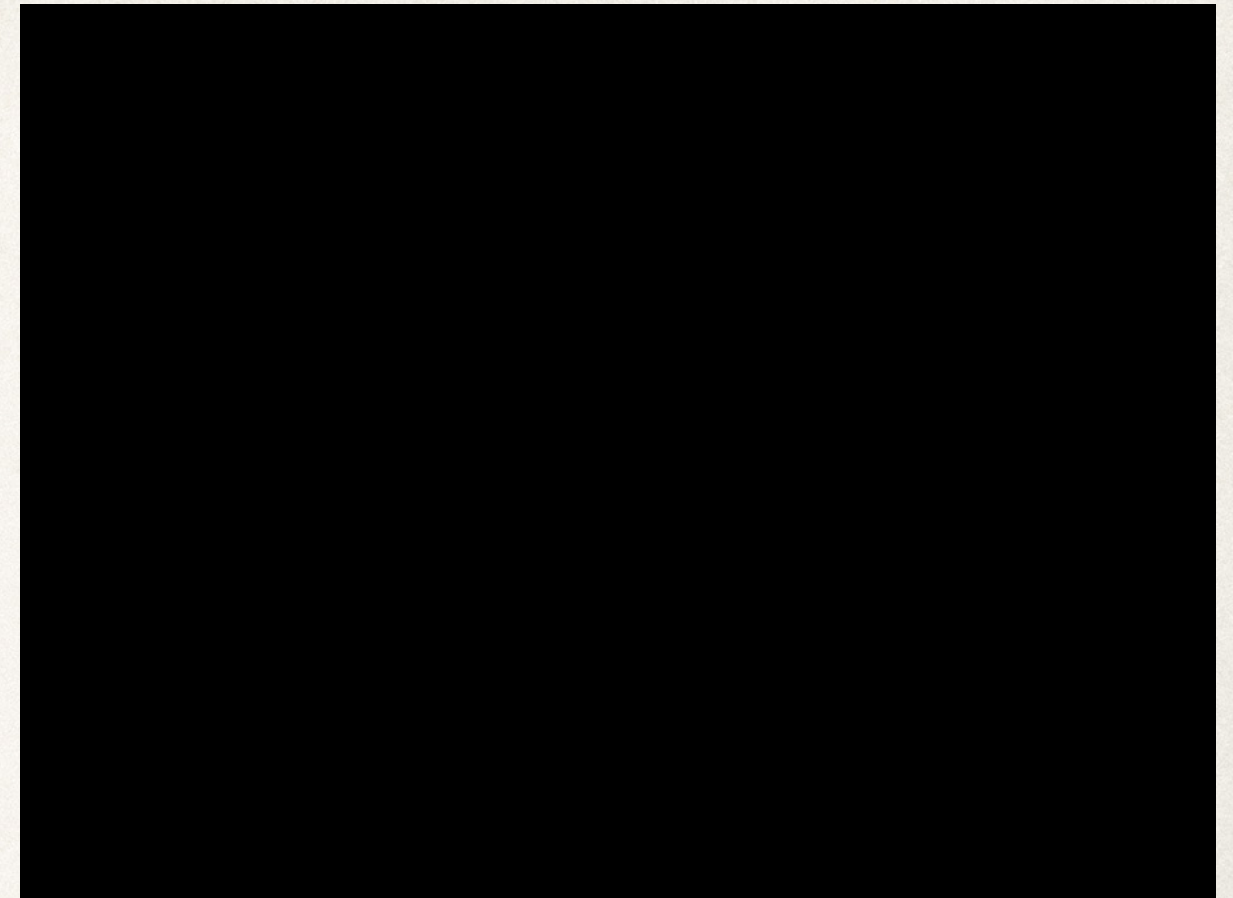


40. *Ach Herr, lass dein lieb'*



Often, the impact of our efforts is hard to see...

- ❖ Even during Bach's lifetime, Bach's "old" styles and conventions were rebuffed by listeners and leadership
- ❖ *Passion according to St. John* rewritten in 1725, 1737, and 1749
- ❖ Bach performs Telemann and Keiser in concert halls in Leipzig, while sacred passions are abandoned by his successors.



Departures and Applications

- ❖ Question: *How do we go about setting the scriptural foundation for worship in Lent and Holy Week? Responsive reading? Assisted reading?*
- ❖ Question: *How have the thematic uses of familiar hymns old and new invited participation among gathered people?*
- ❖ Question: *How do we identified poetic forms that reflect and enhance the story itself? Solo reflection? Choral reflection?*
- ❖ Question: *How do we ensure that the passion drama is emphasized "Extra Nos?" Examples of overdone drama?*

Recommended Recordings:

- ❖ Johann Sebastian Bach, "St. John Passion, BWV 245," John Eliot Gardiner, conductor; recorded 1985 on Archiv Deutsche Grammophon GMBH, streaming audio, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAVbpvOpsh8>
- ❖ Johann Sebastian Bach, "St. John Passion (1725 Version) BWV 245," Rene Jacobs, conductor; recorded April 4, 2023 by Netherlands Bach Society, streaming audio, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpsLy3Wrwgs&t=360s>
- ❖ Reinhold Keiser, "Brockes-Passion," Peter Van Heyghen, conductor; recorded March 25, 2014 on Outhere Productions, streaming audio, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYXaPafdujA>
- ❖ Mendelssohn, Felix, "Christus," Frieder Bergius, conductor; recorded on October 1, 1987 on Carus, streaming audio, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22YFWBBPuYU>
- ❖ Georg Telemann, "Brockes-Passion," Rene Jacobs, conductor; recorded March 24, 2009 on Harmonia Mundi. Streaming audio, accessed July 15, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l20ZBIvb1Rg&list=OLAK5uy_ncBJUbU3tyNzSx2MGZDX0bnbLwnp9Znok

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ Gardiner, John Eliot., *Bach: Music in the Castle of Heaven*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2013., 343-396.
- ❖ Loewe, Andreas and Katherine Firth: *Martin Luther and the Arts*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2023).
- ❖ Loewe, Andreas, *Johann Sebastian Bach's St. John Passion (BWV 245): A Theological Commentary, With a new Study Translation by Katherine Firth* Studies in the History of Christian Thought (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
- ❖ Leaver, Robin A., "Religion and Religious Currents," in *The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach*, ed. Raymond Erickson (Milwaukee: Amadeus Press, an imprint of Hal Leonard, 2009), 105-140.
- ❖ Smither, Howard E. *The Oratorio in the Baroque Era - Protestant Germany and England: A History of the Oratorio, 4 vols.* Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina: 1977. 3-171.
- ❖ Sposato, Jeffery S. *Leipzig after Bach: Church and Concert Life in a German City*. London: Oxford University Press: 2018., 1-154.
- ❖ Stiller, Guenther. *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*. Translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellet, and Hilton C. Oswalt. Edited by Robin A. Leaver. St Louis: Concordia, 1984. 1-254.
- ❖ Tiefel, James, "The Passion History in Lenten Worship" *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (Fall 2023): 305ff.
- ❖ Westermeier, Paul. *Te Deum: The Church and Music*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998., 222-244.
- ❖ Wolff, Christoph. *Bach: The Learned Musician*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001., 288-303.
- ❖ _____. *Bach's Musical Universe: The Composer and His Work*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2020., 192-223.

39. Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen

