English Text for St. John Passion

PART I
BETRAYAL AND CAPTURE, John 18:1–14

1 Chorus
Herr, unser Herrscher,
dessen Ruhm
in allen Landen herrlich ist
zeig uns durch deine Passion,
daß du, der wahre Gottessohn,
zu aller Zeit,
auch in der größten Niedrigkeit,
verherrlicht worden bist!

Lord, thou our master,
whose name
in every land is honored,
show us in this, thy Passion’s hour,
how thou, the very Son of God,
for endless time,
art now become, though brought so low,
forever glorified!

2 Recitative and Chorus
Evangelist:
Jesus went with his disciples over the brook Kedron where there was a garden, to which came Jesus and his disciples. Judas also—he who was false—knew the place full well, for Jesus resorted thither oft to be with his disciples. Judas, therefore, who had gathered a body of men, whom the chief priests and the Pharisees had sent him, now cometh thither with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Therefore Jesus, knowing all things that were to come upon him, went straightway forth and said unto them:

Jesus:
Whom seek ye here?

Evangelist:
And they answered to him:

Soldiers:
Jesum von Nazareth!

Evangelist:
Jesus sayeth unto them:

Jesus:
I am he.

Evangelist:
Judas also, he which betrayed him, stood there beside them. And as soon as he had said, “I am he,” all of them went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked he of them a second time:

Jesus:
Whom seek ye here?

Evangelist:
Again they answered:
Soldiers: Jesum von Nazareth!  
Soldiers: Jesus of Nazareth.

Evangelist: Jesus answered and said:

Jesus: To you I have said, “I am he.” If ye seek for me, then let these go their way!

3 Chorale
O wondrous love, O love excelling, which bade thee make this vale of tears thy dwelling! I live on earth and earthly pleasures cherish and thou must perish.

4 Recitative
Evangelist: So that the prophesy might be fulfilled which he spake: “Of them which thou gavest to me, not one have I lost, not one.” Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it forth and struck at the high priest’s serving man and cut the man’s right ear off. The man’s name was Malchus. Then said Jesus to Peter:

Jesus: Put up thy sword in its scabbard! Shall I not drink the cup my Father hath given me?

5 Chorale
Thy will, O Lord Our God, be done on earth as ‘round thy heavenly throne. Thy patience, Lord, on us bestow, that we obey in weal and woe. Stay thou the hand and spoil the skill of them who seek to thwart thy will.

6 Recitative
Evangelist: The body of soldiers with their captain, who were sent by the crowd, laid hold of Jesus and bound him fast and led him away at first to Annas, for he was Caiaphas’s father-in-law, which was high priest that same year. Now it had been Caiaphas who had told the crowd that it was expedient that one man should die for all.

7 Aria (Alto)
Von den Stricken meiner Sünden
Mich zu entbinden,
Wird mein Heil gebunden.
Mich von allen Lasterbeulen
Völlig zu heilen,
Läßt er sich verwunden.

From the shackles of my vices
to liberate me,
they have bound my Savior.
From my aching wounds and bruises
fully to heal me,
he was bruised and wounded.
8 Recitative

*Evangelist:*
Simon Peter also followed with Jesus forth and another disciple.

9 Aria (Soprano)

*Ich folge dir gleichfalls*
I follow thee also
*mit freudigen Schritten*
with joy to be near thee
*Und lasse dich nicht,*
in trouble and strife,
*Mein Leben, mein Licht.*
thou light of my life.
*Befördre den Lauf*
Speed thou my way
*Und höre nicht auf,*
and say me not “nay;”
*Selbst an mir zu ziehen,*
but let me be near thee
*Zu schieben, zu bitten.*
to solace and cheer thee.

10 Recitative

*Evangelist:*
That other disciple to the high priest long had been known and went with Jesus within, and entered into his court. But without at the doorway, Peter stood. Then did that other disciple, who was known to them in the palace, go out and spoke unto her that tended the door and brought Peter also within. Then saith the maid that tended the door to Peter:

*Maid:*
Art thou not also one of his disciples?

*Evangelist:*
He saith:

*Peter:*
I am not!

*Evangelist:*
The officers and the servants who stood there had made them a fire out of coals (for it was cold) and warmed themselves. Peter also stood among them and warmed himself. Then did the high priest ask and question Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrines. Jesus answered to him:

*Jesus:*
I ever spake openly and freely to the world. And in the synagogue I oftentimes was teaching and in the temple wherein the Jews always do resort, nor have I ever in secret said aught. Why askest thou this of me? Ask thou of them who have heard me what I said to them and what I taught them! Ask thou of them, for behold, they know all that I have told them.

*Evangelist:*
And when Jesus thus had spoken, an officer who stood near to Jesus struck him with the palm of his hand and said:

*Officer:*
And dost thou then dare to answer the high priest so?
**Evangelist:**
Jesus answered unto him:

**Jesus:**
If I spoke aught of ill, bear thou witness of my evil words, but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?

**11 Chorale**
Who was it Lord, did smite thee, thy good with ill requite thee, so fouly treated thee? For thou wert no offender, nor didst to sin surrender, from evil thou wert ever free. My sins and evil doing are like the sands bestrewing the mighty ocean’s shore. These sins it was that brought thee thy misery, and wrought thee the host of torments that thou bore.

**12 Recitative and Chorus**
**Evangelist:**
Now Annas had Jesus bound and sent him bound to Caiaphas. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said then unto him:

**Servants:**
Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer? 
Art thou not one of his disciples?

**Evangelist:**
But Peter denied it and said:

**Peter:**
I am not!

**Evangelist:**
Then says one of the high priest’s servants, being kinsman of him, whom Peter had smitten and cut his ear off:

**Servant:**
Saw I not thee in the garden with him?

**Evangelist:**
Simon Peter denied a third time, and straightway then did the cock crow. Then did Peter bring to mind the word of Jesus and he went out and wept bitterly.

**13 Aria (Tenor)**
Ach, mein Sinn, 
Ah, my soul, 
Wo willt Du endlich hin, 
how futile is thy goal, 
Wo soll ich mich erquicken? 
where may contentment find thee? 
Bleib ich hier, 
Shall I stay, 
Oder wünsch ich mir berg und Hügel 
shall I go away and the leave the hills 
Auf den Rücken? 
behind me? 
Bei der Welt ist gar kein Rat, 
Earth no peace doth me afford, 
Und im Herzen stehn 
ever ruining 
Die Schmerzen meiner Missetat, 
my wrongdoing, evil deeds abhorred, 
Weil der Knecht den Herrn verleugnet hat. 
since the servant has denied his lord.
14 Chorale
Peter, while his conscience slept, thrice denied his Savior; when it woke he bitter wept at his base behavior. Jesus let me not forget, true devotion teach me, when on evil I am set, through my conscience reach me.

PART II
INTERROGATION AND FLAGELLATION, John 18:28–40, 19:1

15 Chorale
Christ, through whom we all are blessed, knew no evil doing, him at night they did arrest, like a thief pursuing. Led before the godless throng, and falsely convicted, laughed at, scoffed at, spat upon, as the Word predicted.

16 Recitative and Chorus
Evangelist:
Then led away they Jesus to the hall of judgment, and it was early. And they went not themselves therein lest there they should be corrupted, but that they might eat the Passover. Then unto them, Pontius Pilate went out and said:

Pilate:
What accusation bring ye now against this man?

Evangelist:
And they answered him and said unto him:

Mob:
Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter, wir hätten dir ihn nicht überantwortet.

Mob:
If this man were not a malefactor, we had not brought him here before thee.

Evangelist:
Then Pilate said unto them:

Pilate:
Now come and take ye him and judge ye him according to your law.

Evangelist:
The crowd therefore said unto him:

Mob:
Wir dürfen niemand töten.

Mob:
By death we may not punish.

Evangelist:
That so might be fulfilled the word of Jesus, which he had spoken and had signified by what manner of death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the hall and again he called in Jesus and said to him:

Pilate:
Art thou the King of the Jews then?

Evangelist:
Jesus then answered him:

_Jesus:_
Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did these others tell it thee to say of me?

_Evangelist:_
And Pilate thus answered him:

_Pilate:_
Am I a Jew? Thy nation and thy chief priests have brought thee here for judgment before me. What then hast thou done?

_Evangelist:_
And Jesus answered him:

_Jesus:_
My kingdom is not of this world. Were my kingdom of this world, then my servants all would fight battle that I be not delivered unto the crowd. Nay then, for not from hence is my kingdom.

17 Chorale
Ah, mighty king, renowned and great forever, to tell thy kindness is a vain endeavor. How may this mortal heart contrive to show thee how much I owe thee? My feeble tongue and fancy cannot fashion a fitting counterpart to thy compassion. How can I hope to pay thy benefaction by worthy action?

18 Recitative and Chorus
_Evangelist:_
Then Pilate said unto him:

_Pilate:_
Art thou in truth then a king?

_Evangelist:_
Jesus answered to him:

_Jesus:_
Thou says't I am a king. To this end was I born, for this to earth came I, that I bear witness to the truth. And all who seek the truth will hear and heed my teaching.

_Evangelist:_
Then said Pilate to him:

_Pilate:_
What is truth then?

_Evangelist:_
And when he thus had spoken, he went out once again to the crowd and said unto them:

_Pilate:_
I find in him no fault at all. At Passover ye have a custom, that one man I should release you.
Would ye then that I should release the King of the Jews?

*Evangelist:*
Then cried they together all again and shouted:

*Mob:*
Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam! 

*Evangelist:*
Barabbas he set free, a robber. Then Pilate took out Jesus and scourged him.

19 *Arioso (Bass)*
Betrachte, meine Seel,
Mit ängstlichem Vergnügen,
Mit bittrer Lust
Und halb beklemmtem Herzen
Dein höchstes Gut
in Jesu Schmerzen,
Wie dir aus Dornen, so ihn stechen,
Die Himmelsschlüsselblumen blühen!
Du kannst viel süße Frucht
Von seiner Wermut brechen
Drum sieh ohn Unterlaß auf ihn!

Bethink thee, o my soul,
in agony and rapture,
although with woe
thy heart be low and languish,
thy precious boon
was Jesus’s anguish,
for thee the thorn-crown which he wore
with heaven-scented flowers will bloom.
For thee the sweetest fruit
his bitter wormwood bore,
so look unceasingly to him.

20 *Aria (Tenor)*
Erwäge, wie sein
blutgefärbter Rücken
In allen Stücken
Den Himmel gleiche geht,
Daran, nachdem die Wasserwogen
Von unsrer Sündflut sich verzogen
Der allerschönste Regenbogen
Als Gottes Gnadenzeichen steht!

Imagine that his
blood-bespattered body
in every member
is part of heaven above.
And see the waves of sin subsiding,
sunbeams again, dark clouds dividing,
the rainbow fair the sky be striding,
God’s token bright of grace and love.

21 *Recitative and Chorus*
*Evangelist:*
The soldiers platted then for him a crown of thorns and put it upon his head and put on him a purple robe and said:

*Soldiers:*
Sei gegrüßet, lieber Jüdenkönig! 

*Evangelist:*
And then with their hands they smote him. Again came Pilate forth from the hall and to them
saith he:

_Pilate:_
See ye, I now will bring him forth to you that you may know that in him no fault do I find.

_Evangelist:_
And then did Jesus come forth still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Unto them said Pilate:

_Pilate:_
See ye, see the man!

_Evangelist:_
Now therefore, when the priests and officers saw him, cried they out and said:

_Priests:_
Kreuzige, kreuzige!

_Evangelist:_
Then unto them saith Pilate:

_Pilate:_
Take ye now this man and crucify him, for I find no fault at all in him!

_Evangelist:_
The crowd gave answer and said:

_Priests:_
Wir haben ein Gesetz, und nach dem Gesetz soll er sterben; denn er hat sich selbst zu Gottes Sohn gemacht.

_Evangelist:_
Now when Pilate heard what thus was said, he was the more afraid and went up once again to the judgment hall and saith to Jesus:

_Pilate:_
From whence then art thou?

_Evangelist:_
But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate saith unto him:

_Pilate:_
Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not I have power to crucify and power have I too to release thee?

_Evangelist:_
Jesus then answered him:

_Jesus:_
Thou couldest have no power over me, none at all except it were given thee from above; whereby, he that delivered me unto thee is the greater sinner.
Evangelist:
And from thenceforth did Pilate seek that he might release him.

22 Chorale
Our freedom, Son of God, arose when thou wast cast in prison; and from the durance that thou chose our liberty is risen. Didst thou not choose a slave to be, we all were slaves eternally.

23 Recitative and Chorus
Evangelist:
But the crowd cried out and shouted to Pilate:

Priests:
Lässest du diesen los, so bist du des Kaisers Freund nicht; denn wer sich zum König machet, der ist wider den Kaiser.

Priests:
If thou let this man go, then art thou not Caesar’s friend, for whoever maketh himself a king is foe unto Caesar.

Evangelist:
Then when Pilate heard them speaking thus, straightway did he bring Jesus forth and sat in the seat of judgment, in a place that is called the High Pavement, but in Hebrew it is Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover and about the sixth hour, and he saith to the crowd:

Pilate:
See ye your king, yea, behold him!

Evangelist:
They cried out ever:

Priests:
Weg, weg mit dem, kreuzige ihn!

Priests:
Away with him, crucify him!

Evangelist:
Pilate saith unto them:

Pilate:
Would ye that your king be crucified?

Evangelist:
The chief priests answered and said to him:

Priests
Wir haben keinen König denn den Kaiser.

Priests
We have no king but Caesar.

Evangelist:
And then he delivered him to them, that they might crucify him. So took they with them Jesus and led they him away. And he bore his cross and went thenceforth to a place that is called the Place of Skulls, which is in the Hebrew tongue called Golgotha.
24 Aria (Bass) with Chorus
Eilt, ihr angefochtenen Seelen,
Geht aus euren Marterhöhlen,
Eilt (Wohin?) nach Golgatha!
Nehmet an des Glaubens Flügel,
Flieht (Wo hin?) zum Kreuzeshügel,
Eure Wohlfahrt blüht allda!

Come ye souls whom care oppresses,
leave ye troubles’ dark recesses,
come (Where?) to Golgotha!
Take the wings of faith to bear you,
fly (Where?) his cross to carry
happiness awaits you there!

25 Recitative and Chorus
Evangelist: And there crucified they him, and with him two other on either side one, Jesus in the midst between them. And Pontius Pilate wrote them an epigraph and put it up on the cross. On it was written: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” And this epigraph many Jews were reading, for not far from the city was the place where Jesus was crucified. And these words were written both in Hebrew, Latin likewise, also in Greek. Then said the chief priests of the Jews unto Pilate:

Priests: Schreibe nicht: der Jüden König, sondern daß er gesaget habe: Ich bin der Jüden König.
Priests: Write him not as our king, rather that he himself has said this: “I am their king and master.”

Evangelist: And Pilate then answered:

Pilate: What I myself have written, I have written.

26 Chorale
Within my heart’s recesses there sparkles bright thy name, my spirit glad rejoices to see its steady flame. O shine within my vision, as comfort in my need, thy cross, dear Lord, will cheer me, for us to death did bleed.

THE DEATH OF JESUS, John 19:23–30

27 Recitative and Chorus
Evangelist: And then did the soldiers, after thus they had crucified Jesus, portion out his garments in four equal portions, and for each of the soldiers there was a part, and also his coat. Now the coat had no seam and was woven from end to end, one piece it was throughout. They said therefore one to the other:

Soldiers: Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen, sondern darum losen, wes er sein soll.
Soldiers: Let us rend not nor divide it, but by lot determine whose it shall be.

Evangelist: That the Scripture might be fulfilled, that which sayeth: “They portioned out my raiment equally among them and for my vesture they cast lots.” These things therefore were done by the soldiers. Now standing beside the cross of Jesus was his mother and the sister of his mother,
and Mary, Cleophas's wife, also Mary Magdalena. When then Jesus saw his mother near him and his well-beloved disciple standing by her, he saith unto his mother:

*Jesus:* Look, woman, behold thy son!

*Evangelist:* Then saith he to this disciple:

*Jesus:* See thou, here behold thy mother!

**28 Chorale**
In his final hour did he think him of his mother, that when he was gone she be cared for by this other. Make your peace with God and man, that upon the morrow, you may end this mortal span, free from care and sorrow.

**29 Recitative**
*Evangelist:* That disciple took her to his own home. And now since Jesus knew full well that all was accomplished, as was written in the Scripture, he saith:

*Jesus:* I thirst!

*Evangelist:* Now stood there a vessel of vinegar. They filled from the vessel then a sponge with vinegar and put it on a twig of hyssop, and put it to his mouth to drink it. Therefore Jesus, when he had received the vinegar, saith he:

*Jesus:* It is fulfilled.

**30 Aria (Alto)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Es ist vollbracht!</th>
<th>The end has come!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O Trost vor die gekränkten Seelen!</td>
<td>O rest and peace for stricken spirits!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Trauernacht</td>
<td>This dreary night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>läßt nun die letzte Stunde zählen.</td>
<td>is filled with sad foreboding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Held aus Juda siegt mit Macht</td>
<td>Our hero battles on with might,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>und schließt den Kampf.</td>
<td>and ends the fight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es ist vollbracht!</td>
<td>The end has come!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**31 Recitative**
*Evangelist:* Then bowed he his head and was gone.

**32 Aria (Bass) with Chorus**
Mein teurer Heiland, laß dich fragen,
Jesu, der du warest tot,
Da du nunmehr ans Kreuz geschlagen
Und selbst gesagt:
Es ist vollbracht,
Lebest nun ohn Ende,
Bin ich vom Sterben frei gemacht?
In der letzten Todesnot,
Nirgend mich hinwende
Kann ich durch deine Pein und Sterben
Das Himmelreich ererben?
Ist aller Welt Erlösung da?
Als zu dir, der mich versühnt,
O du lieber Herre!
Du kannst vor Schmerzen
zwar nichts sagen;
Gib mir nur, was du verdient,
Doch neigest du das Haupt
Und sprichst stillschweigend: ja.
Mehr ich nicht begehre!

O thou, my Savior, give me an answer;
Jesus, thou who once wert dead,
though thou upon thy cross art crucified
and though thou has said:
“The end has come,”
livest now forever,
am I from death forever free?
when the path of death I tread,
Lord, forsake me never.
Through thy despair and desolation,
am I assured salvation?
Have all our sins been washed away?
God’s wrath thou from me hast turned,
 saved me from disaster!
Thou must for grief
indeed be silent
My redemption thou hast earned,
yet bowest thou thy head
to say in silence, “Yea.”
my beloved master!

33 Recitative
Evangelist:
And then behold, the veil of the temple was rented in twain, from top to bottom. And the firmament rocked and quaked, and the rocks burst asunder, and the graves were opened again, and up arose many bodies of saints that slept.

34 Arioso (Tenor)
Mein Herz, indem die ganze Welt
Bei Jesu Leiden gleichfalls leidet,
Die Sonne sich in Trauer kleidet,
Der Vorhang reißt, der Fels zerfällt,
Die Erde bebt, die Gräber spalten,
Weil sie den Schöpfer sehn erkalten,
Was willst du deines Ortes tun?

My heart, see all the world
is plunged in woe because of Jesus’s anguish,
the sun itself by grief is shrouded,
the veil is rent, the rocks are burst,
creation quakes, the graves are opened
when their redeemer see they lifeless,
and as for thee, what wilt thou do?

35 Aria (Soprano)
Zerfließe, mein Herze,
in Fluten der Zähren
dem Höchsten zu Ehren!
Erzähle der Welt
und dem Himmel die Not:
Dein Jesus ist tot!

With tears overflowing,
your homage bestowing,
the master exalt ye!
Thou heaven and earth
let the tidings be spread:
thy Jesus is dead!
36 Recitative

Evangelist:
The chief priests therefore since it was the preparation, in order that the bodies not remain on the cross for the Sabbath (for a High Day that Sabbath was with the Jews), made a plea that Pilate allow their legs to be broken that away they might be taken. Then came the soldiers and brake they the legs of the first one and the other, which was crucified there with him. When at length they had come to Jesus, seeing clearly that he was already dead, therefore they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers then took up his spear and with the spear did he pierce his side, and forthwith came there blood and water out. And he who has seen these things of them has borne record, and his record is true, nor indeed can he fail to know whereof he speaketh that ye believe him. For all these things were done, as promised by the Holy Scripture: "A bone of him shall not be broken." Again in the Scriptures another has said: "And they shall look on him whom they have pierced."

37 Chorale

Help, O Christ, thou Son of God, through your bitter anguish, that the favor you have won evil deeds may vanquish. How and why our Savior died, we must ponder truly, and though weak, have rightly tried, Lord, to thank thee duly.

38 Recitative

Evangelist:
There came unto Pilate Joseph of Arimathaea, a disciple too was he (but secretly, fearing the crowd) and besought leave to take away Jesus's body. And for this Pilate did give him leave. Therefore came he thither and carried Jesus's body away. There came thither too Nicodemus, he who at first had come to Jesus in the night and brought a mixture of myrrh and of aloes together, an hundred-pound weight. And forthwith took they Jesus's body and wound it in the linen clothes, with the myrrh and aloes in the manner of the Jews to bury. In Golgotha where his cross was, where he was crucified was a garden, in the garden was a grave, wherein as yet man never had been laid. Therein they therefore laid Jesus, for the preparation day of the Jews, for this new grave was nigh at hand.

39 Chorus

Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine,  
Die ich nun weiter nicht beweine,  
Ruht wohl  
und bringt auch mich zur Ruh!  
Das Grab, so euch bestimmet ist  
Und ferner keine Not umschließt,  
Macht mir den Himmel auf  
Und schließt die Hölle zu.  

Rest well, sacred bones,  
for which I no longer weep—  
rest well,  
and bring me also to my rest.  
The grave that is yours,  
that holds no further suffering,  
for me opens heaven  
and closes hell.

40 Chorale

Oh Lord, thy little angel send when e'er my mortal life shall end to bear my soul to heaven, let them my body's anguish cease, my soul to wait the day, in peace, when thou again awake it. And then from death awaken me. Through these poor eyes, my Lord, I see the Son of God, thy glorious face! My Savior and my font of grace! Lord Jesus Christ, oh hear thou me, oh hear thou me, thy name I praise eternally!
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