

Scene of Stefan before City Council, urging resistance to the Interim

INT. ELEGANT MAGDEBURG CHURCH WITH HIGH CEILINGS - DAY

Several elders are present before City Council, where the council members - including Chairman JOHANNUS and GUSTAV - sit at the front of the church behind a marble table.

AMSDORF

"...They forced the residents of thirty German cities to convert. Forced them! Is that rightful leadership worthy of submission?"

GALLUS

"Before the blood of our sons and grandsons even finished spilling into the battlefield, the Emperor gave Maurice the land and title of our beloved John Frederick."

SEVERAL ELDERS AND PASTORS

"Judas!" "Traitor!"

Stefan waves papers comprising the Emperor's Interim. In his other hand, he holds a black leather-bound Bible.

STEFAN

"He forces us to choose this..."

(holding up the Interim)

"...over this."

(lowering the Interim, holding up Bible)

"If you can't refute the biblical plan of salvation with words, use brute force."

JOHANNUS

"Such compromises are necessary in politics to keep the peace."

Pastors shout protest.

AMSDORF

"How can we have peace through sin? Safety through lies? In matters of faith, a little leaven leavens the whole lump."

GUSTAV

"Such purity of doctrine is to be expected of a pastor, and is admirable, but your City Council is not comprised of pastors and bishops. Our aim is secular: to keep the peace of this city."

STEFAN

(shouting)

"Nothing is secular! All is Christ's."

SEVERAL PASTORS

"Amen!"

STEFAN

"Peace and prosperity at the expense of truth is a devil's trick, sir. Don't bite that bait - it's honey-coated poison."

GUSTAV

"But we must be prudent."

GALLUS

"To accept this Interim is a godless prudence."

STEFAN

"That's right."

GALLUS

"It's taking the mark of the beast on your hand in order to be able to buy or sell. To accept these false dogmas in hopes of freeing ourselves from our present misfortunes, and to do all this without the command and promise of God - this is idolatry."

STEFAN

"You must obey God in your office, or you are not fit for office."

ELDERS AND PASTORS

(many shouting)

"Amen!" "Yes sir!" "Good!"

JOHANNUS

"Do you know where this line of reasoning leads?"

STEFAN

"We are prepared to follow Christ unto death - and so should you."

GUSTAV

(scoffing)

"Your children could die of disease and starvation before the siege is through. Do not speak so hastily, lest God prove you."

STEFAN

"I speak quickly lest I be beguiled by the serpent to consider his tasty fruit an alternative to God's glory."

JOHANNUS

"Christ did warn us to count the cost. It is better not to begin a race than to begin a race and not finish."

STEFAN

"I have counted the cost, and with God's help..."
(he pauses, then with a tremor in his voice,
says)

"I am prepared to pay it."