

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

Form: Aria (T)-Recit (S/A)-Duet (S/A)-Duet (S/A)-Chorale/chorus

Introduction & updates at [melvunger.com](http://melvunger.com).

In his first year in Leipzig, Bach produced two-part or double cantatas for at least 13 Sundays (before and after the sermon): BWV 75, 76, 21, 24+185, 147, 186, 179+199, 70, 181+18, 31+4, 172+59, 194+165, 22+23. See Wolff, "Learned Musician," 269. By contrast, 167 requires fewer resources and is smaller in scale (no opening chorus, for example). See side note for more.

J.S. Bach

## Cantata No. 167

### Ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes Liebe

•Praise to God for sending His Son, our Salvation (167/1). The gigue rhythm reflects the sheer joy characteristic of the story surrounding John the Baptist's conception and birth (see Lk. 1:14, 44, 64). The pastorale associations of 12/8 meter may reflect the fact that John's parents lived in "the hill country of Judah" (see Lk. 1:39). The triplet gestures, which bubble upward sequentially, appear to reflect the offering of praise while the interplay among solo violin, continuo, voice, and tutti strings appear to reflect the interaction of the people ("Menschen") offering the dance of praise. The text is a quasi-paraphrase of the canticle of Zacharias (the Benedictus) recorded in the day's Gospel.

167/1. (Aria.)  
(Andante ♩ = 69.)

Ritornello characterized by "call & response" (in parallel 6ths) to depict text that follows.

G major

D major

Text painting: Frequent descending scales and/or arpeggios probably depict God's love extended down to people; ascending figures depict the praise response.

#### Instrumentation:

Clarino (in last movement)  
Oboe (also Oboe da caccia)  
Vln I, II  
Via  
SATB  
Continuo

Movement 1 is an example of modified da capo form, which Bach cultivated, especially in Leipzig. The return of the A section is modified so that the movement can return to the tonic key.

E minor

D major

D major

A minor

G major

D pedal . . .

G major

13. Tenore.

Rhetorical emphasis on "love."

Ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes Lie - be, ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes

Continuo only

+strings

Continuo only

G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

16.

Lie-be und prei-set sei-ne Gü-tig-keit; ihr Menschen, rüh-met Got-tes

Solo Vln I with continuo (Vln marked solo). Frequent descending scales and/or arpeggios probably depict God's love extended down to people.

lower strings tacet

D major  
"Call & Response" structure among singer, solo violin, and tutti strings, as if differentiating between individual and group responses to the call to praise God.

19.

Lie-be, ihr Men-schen, rüh-met Gottes Liebe und prei-set sei-ne Gü-tig-

lower strings still tacet

B major E minor

21.

Text painting: Long melisma for "praise."

keit, prei-

Vln I marked "tutti ma piano"

other strings enter, marked "p."

D major A pedal . . .

23.

- set sei-ne Gü-tig-keit, ihr Menschen, rüh-met Gottes Liebe und preiset seine Gü-tig-

Vln I

Vln II, Vla tacet

D major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

26. *keit.* Ritornello: All strings, marked "f."  
Vln I

*mf*

D major

29. Lobt ihn aus rei\_nem Her\_zens - trie-be,

Continuo only

+strings

*p*

D major B7

32. lobt ihn aus reinem Herzens - triebe, aus rei - nem Herzens - trie - be, dass er

Continuo only

+strings

*tr*

E minor

Referenced in Zechariah's canticle (i.e., the Benedictus, part of the Gospel reading).

35. uns zu bestimmter Zeit, dass er uns zu be - stimm - ter Zeit das **Horn des Heils**, den Weg zum

Continuo only

Rhetorical punctuated chords for "appointed time"

A7 D major G7 C major B7 E minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

Individual words are given rhetorical emphasis with separating rests & repeated/pulsing Vln II/Vla notes.

37.

Le-ben, das Horn des Heils, den Weg zum Leben an Je - su, seinem

+strings

L.H.

Continuo only

B pedal ...

E minor

40.

Sohn, ge - ge - ben. Lobt ihn aus reinem Herzens - trie - be, dass er

Vln I

+Vla

Vln II

L.H.

E minor

B minor

F#7

43.

uns zu bestimmter Zeit das Horn des Heils, den Weg zum Leben an Je - su, sei - nem

L.H.

Continuo only

F# pedal ...

B minor

46.

Sohn, - ge - ge - ben. Ritornello

mf +strings

B minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

Return of A section is modified so that it can close in the original key of G major.

48

Ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes Lie - - - be, ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes

Continuo only +strings Continuo only

B minor G major

51

Liebe und preiset sei - ne Gütig-keit; ihr Menschen, rühmet Got - - tes Liebe,

Solo Vln I

54.

ihr Menschen, rüh-met Gottes Liebe und prei-set sei - ne Gütigkeit, prei -

other upper strings tacet

Text painting: Long, rising melisma for "praise."

E7 A minor D7 G major

57.

- set sei - - - ne Gü - tig-

tutti strings ma piano

D pedal ... G major

59. **keit, ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes Liebe und preiset sei - ne Gü - tig - keit!**

Continuo alone +strings mf

G major **Dal Segno.**

167/2. **Recitativo.** Beginning text is verbatim from Zechariah's canticle (i.e., the Benedictus, part of the Gospel reading), the rest of the sentence is a paraphrase (applied to the Christian church), yet the statement is given to the Alto, often the voice of the believing soul, instead of Bass, perhaps because Zechariah doubted and was punished with being unable to speak until John's birth (Lk. 1:20). See Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar," vol. 1, p. 541; vol. 3, 125.

Chromatic Saturation in the vocal part in 10 mm.

1. **Alto.** **B G E C A D# F#**

**Ge - lo - bet sei der Herr Gott Is - ra - el,** der sich in

E minor

3. **F D B-flat C#**

Gnaden zu uns wendet und seinen Sohn vom hohen Himmels - thron zum Welt - er - lö - ser

E7 A minor C major C7 A7

Allusion to Epistle of the day: A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Is. 40:3), applied to John the Baptist in the New Testament (see Matthew 3).

6. **D minor D7**

sen - det. Erst stell - te sich Jo - hannes ein und muss - te Weg und Bahn dem

Ascending bass line in long notes & consonant chords describing the coming of Jesus contrasts with the chromatically descending figures & diminished chords for the description of lost humankind. 6



# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

• God's promises of a Savior have now been fulfilled (167/3). A highly varied movement with striking passages in which the 2 singers (probably Mary and Elizabeth, mothers of Jesus and John, respectively) sing in parallel thirds and sixths about God's promises to them: "Gottes Wort, das trüget nicht." Structurally, outer sections in 3/4 meter frame a middle section in 4/4.

4-part texture:  
Oboe da caccia, S, A, Continuo.

167/3.

## Duetto. Andante. (♩ = 66.)

The duet appears to be the voices of Elizabeth & Mary, both of whom received divine promises of coming birth. The oboe da caccia probably represents the "hill country of Judah" where Mary visited Elizabeth (see Lk. 1:39).

A minor The pulsing continuo bass suggests inevitability.

D major

## 7. Soprano.

Paraphrase of Psalm 33:4, 9.

A minor

A minor

## 10.

D minor

A minor

## 13.

A minor

C major

16.

was er ver - spricht, es geschieht, was er - verspricht,  
schieht, was er verspricht, es geschieht, was er ver -

Trill (tr) above the first note of the first staff.

19.

Got - tes Wort das trü - get nicht, das trü - get nicht,  
spricht, Got - tes Wort das trü - get nicht, das trü - get nicht,

C7

F major

22.

das trü - get nicht, es geschieht, was er - verspricht,  
das trü - get nicht, es geschieht, was er - ver -

G7

C major

25.

was er - verspricht, es ge - schieht, was er ver - spricht.  
spricht, was er - ver - spricht, es geschieht, was er - ver - spricht.

*mf* dynamic marking above the piano part in the final measure.

C major

28.

Got - tes Wort das trüget

Got - tes Wort das trü - get

C major D7 G major

32.

nicht, Got - tes Wort das trü - get

nicht, Got - tes Wort das trü - get

A7 D major E7 A minor

35.

nicht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, es geschieht,

nicht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, es ge -

A minor A7 G# dim.7 E7 A minor

39.

was er verspricht, es geschieht, was er ver - spricht, was er ver -

schieht, was er verspricht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, was er verspricht, es ge -

G7 C major C7 A7 D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

43.

spricht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, Gottes Wort das trü - get nicht, das trü - get nicht,  
schieht, was er verspricht, Gottes Wort das trü - get nicht, das trü - get nicht,

E7 A minor

47.

das trü - get nicht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, was er ver -  
das trü - get nicht, es geschieht, was er verspricht, was er verspricht, es ge -

A minor

51.

spricht, es geschieht, was er ver - spricht.  
schieht, was er ver - spricht.

*mf* (tr)

A minor

54.

D major E7 A7 A minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

Contrasting middle section of the da capo aria is in 2 parts: first a section that is highly imitative and melismatic in the voices and in a contrasting meter.

Text painting: Melisma to depict the many years since the divine promise in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:14-15) and later to the Patriarchs.

## 58. (Moderato ♩ = 80.) Figura corta

Was er in dem Pa-ra-dies und vor so viel hun-dert Jah -  
 Voices in canon, first 8 notes treated imitatively also in Oboe da caccia & Continuo.

Text painting: God's sure fulfillment of his promises depicted with strict canon.

Was er in dem Pa-ra - dies und vor so viel hun-dert

Figura corta Continuo

A minor

Figura corta

D minor

"...besteht aus drey geschwinden Noten, deren eine allein so lang ist, als die übrigen beyde"  
 Johann Gottfried Walther "Musicalisches Lexicon..." [Leipzig, 1732]  
 ["...consists of 3 fast notes, of which one has the same value as the other two taken together."]

## 61.

Jah -

Oboe da caccia

A minor

A7 D minor

## 64.

D7

G major

G7

C major

C7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

67.

- ren denen Vä - tern, denen Vä - tern schon verhiess,  
 - ren denen Vä - tern, denen Vä - tern schon verhiess,  
 F7 B-flat major G minor C7 C# dim.7 A7 D minor

The second part of the middle section of this da capo form returns to triple meter as the singers (Mary and Elizabeth?) return to parallel 3rds and 6ths, though not to the earlier thematic material of the movement. Instead, the voices sing long, parallel vocal melismas accompanied by a repeated figura corta figure in the bass.

70.

haben wir gott\_lob! er - fah -  
 haben wir gott\_lob! er - fah -  
*mf* figura corta  
 D minor

Text painting: Long melismas for the experience of God's fulfilled promise.

73.

- ren, haben wir gott - lob! er -  
 - ren, haben wir gott - lob! er -  
 G minor G minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

76.

fah - - - - - ren,

fah - - - - - ren,

G minor C7 F major

79.

ha-ben wir gott lob! er - fah - - - - -

ha-ben wir gott lob! er - fah - - - - -

D minor

82.

- ren, ha-ben wir gott - lob! er - - fah - - - - -

- ren, ha-ben wir gott - lob! er - fah - - - - -

D minor

85.

E7

A minor

A7

"Gottlob" appears 7 times at the end (sung imitatively), perhaps in recognition of the biblical usage of "7" to represent perfection and completeness.

88.

ren, ha - ben wir gott - lob! gott - lob!

ren, ha - ben wir gott - lob! gott -

D minor

E7

A minor

91.

gott - lob! gott - lob! er - fah - - ren.

lob! gottlob! er - fah - - ren.

B7

E minor

E minor

E7

Dal Segno.

A7

167/4. **Recitativo.** •Canticle of Zechariah: God's promises now fulfilled (167/4).

Allusions to  
Genesis 3:14-15,  
Galatians 3:8-9, 4:4,  
Genesis 12:1-2,  
Luke 1:64, 67-79.

1. **Basso.**

Des Wei-bes Sa-men kam, nach dem die Zeit er-fül-let; der

Continuo alone

C major

4.

Se-gen, den Gott A-braham, dem Glaubensheld, ver-sprochen, ist wie der Glanz der

D7

G major

The idea of sin's "Kummer" originates in God's words to Adam at the Fall: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil ("Kummer") you shall eat of it all the days of your life (Genesis 3:17). "Creation was subjected to futility..." (Romans 8:20).

6.

Sonne an-ge-brochen, und un-ser Kummer ist gestil-let. Ein stummer Zacha-

Neapolitan 6th chord colors "our sorrow"

A minor

N6

E7

A minor

9.

ri-aspreist mit lau-ter Stim-me Gott (für) vor sei-ne Wunder-that, die er dem Volk er-

A7

D major

D# dim.

E minor

12. Application:

.zeu-get hat. Bedenkt, ihr Chri-sten, auch, was Gott an euch ge-

E7

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

Following chorale is foreshadowed in voice.

This chorale line with opening continuo counterpoint (first 4 notes) reappears in BWV 28/2 ("Nun lob, mein' Seel, den Herren." See Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar," vol. 3, p. 129.

14. **a tempo** (♩ = 84.)

than, und stimmt ihm ein Lob-**lied** an, und stim-met ihm ein Loblied an.

**Choral.**

*mf* Still Continuo only

A minor C major D7 G major G major

Arioso phrase repeats the line of text for emphasis.

Voice of the church, singing the "Loblied" referenced at the end of the previous movement. In setting the 12-line chorale, Bach combines phrases that belong together, while separating 4 lines that / have individual concepts (lines 7 to 10). See Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar," vol. 3, p. 129. Bach changes the meter to 3/4, giving the setting a joyous lilt. Echoing Zechariah's canticle in the Gospel reading ("Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people"), the chorale functions like a catechismal response.

Stanza 5 of the chorale, which is a paraphrase of Psalm 103 (see also 29-8, 51-4).

167/5. **Choral.** (Met.: „Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren“.) •Prayer of praise and dedication to Trinity (167/5).  
Text painting: Continuous 16ths in Ob/Vln I to express joy.

1. **Ritornello**

*mf*

G major

4. G major

7. **Soprano.** Sei Lob und Preis mit Eh- - -

**Alto.** Sei Lob und Preis mit Eh- - -

**Tenore.** Sei Lob und Preis mit Eh- - -

**Basso.** Sei Lob und Preis mit Eh- - -

G major G major

Chorale Phrases 1 & 2.  
Clarin doubling chorale tune (only appearance of the clarino in the cantata).

11.

ren Gott Va - - - ter, Sohn, (hei - li - gem) heiliger

ren Gott Va - - - ter, Sohn, (hei - li - gem) heiliger

ren Gott Va - - - ter, Sohn, (hei - li - gem) heiliger

ren Gott Va - - - ter, Sohn, (hei - li - gem) heiliger

15. G major

Geist.

Geist.

Geist.

Geist.

19. G major

Der woll' in

Der woll' in

Der woll' in

Der woll' in

23.

uns ver - meh - ren, was er uns  
 uns ver - meh - ren, was er uns  
 uns ver - meh - ren, was er uns  
 uns ver - meh - ren, was er uns

27.

aus Ge - nad' ver - heisst. Dass  
 aus Ge - nad' ver - heisst. Dass  
 aus Ge - nad' ver - heisst. Dass  
 aus Ge - nad' ver - heisst. Dass

G major **B** Chorale Phrases 5 & 6.

31.

wir ihm fest ver - trau - en, ganz -  
 wir ihm fest ver - trau - en, ganz -  
 wir ihm fest ver - trau - en, ganz -  
 wir ihm fest ver - trau - en, ganz -

G major

A minor E minor E minor

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

35. Martin Petzoldt suggests that the brief stopping of the 16th-note accompaniment in Ob/Vln I suggests moments of doubt stopping the praise of God. See "Bach Kommentar," vol. 3, p. 129.

Chorale Phrase 7.

lich ver-las-sen auf ihn, von

16th-note accompaniment stops briefly.

39. A7 D major G major D major B minor

Her-zen auf ihn bau-en;

Her-zen auf ihn bau-en;

Her-zen auf ihn bau-en;

Her-zen auf ihn bau-en;

16th-note accompaniment stops briefly.

dass un-ser Herz, Muth und Sinn

43. Chorale Phrase 8. E minor A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

47.

Chorale Phrase 9.

ihm fe - stig - lich an - han -

ihm fe - stig - lich an - han -

ihm fe - stig - lich an - han -

ihm fe - stig - lich an - han -

16th-note accompaniment stops briefly.

51.

A minor

Chorale Phrase 10.

gen: da - rauf singen

gen: da - rauf

gen: da - rauf

gen: da - rauf sing'n

16th-note accompaniment stops briefly.

C major

55.

Chorale Phrases 11 & 12. B7

wir zur Stund! A - men, wir

sin - gen wir zur Stund! A - men, wir

sin - gen wir zur Stund! A - men, wir

wir zur Stund! A - men, wir

E minor F#7 B minor G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 167

59.

wer - - den's er - lan - - - gen, gläub'n wir - - - aus  
wer - den's er - lan - - - gen, gläub'n wir  
wer - - den's er - - lan - - - gen, gläub'n wir - - - aus  
wer - - den's er - lan - - - gen, gläub'n wir - - - aus

63.

Her - - zens - grund.  
aus - Her - zens - grund.  
Her - - zens - grund.  
Her - - zens - grund.

Complete Ritornello  
G major

67.

Octave displacements of bass in full score. See NBA.

G major