

Last changed: 23 October 2025.

Cantata for New Year,
perhaps spurious.

Form: Chorus - Chorale (S) - Recit (T) - Aria (B) - Aria/Chorale (T) - Chorale.

The libretto joins verses from Psalm 146 with stanzas of the 1601 chorale "Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ" by Jakob Ebert (1549–1615), ascribed in Bach's day to the Mühlhausen superintendent Ludwig Hembold (1532–1598). Regarding the cantata's symmetrical structure as well as Alfred Dürr's comments on the cantata as a whole, see side note.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/4; BC V99: probably a spurious work

New Year/Circumcision and Name of Jesus

(BWV 143, 190, 41, 16, 171, 248-IV)

*Galatians 3:23–29 (Through faith we are heirs of the promise)

*Luke 2:21 (Circumcision and naming of Jesus)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: Spurious? ca. 1708–1714?? (See notes.)

Instrumentation:

Corno da caccia I, II, III (unique to Bach)

Timpani

Fagotto

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo, Violoncello



An apparent lack of invention
(see for example, movement
no. 1) leads scholars to doubt
that the music is by Bach.

Markus Rathey argues that
BWV 143 could have been a "lost"
cantata from Bach's Mühlhausen days
(see note).



J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 143

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele (I)

Note: Although Psalm 146 begins and ends with "Hallelujah," the librettist omits the word here when setting the first verse of the psalm, waiting until the closing movement (a setting of the underlying chorale's third stanza) to introduce it.

Coro. •Praise the Lord, O my soul!: Psalm 146:1 (143/1).

143/1. (Tempo giusto ♩ = 72.)

Corno I, II, III

Corno I plays a line associated with the last complete statement of the Psalm verse (see mm. 22–27).

Canonic beginning; Three-fold "Lobe" suggests Trinitarian symbolism.

Motto-like movement:
-Compact
-Almost continuous B-flat major
-Three-fold "Lobe" followed by three-fold "den Herrn" (the third one completing the Psalm verse) plus one concluding statement

For word-for-word translations, see Unger,
Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts.

B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

10

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

Horns punctuate on first beat of each measure...

13

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

be, lo
thou, praise

Corno I

Corno II up 8va

B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

Three-fold "den Herrn" (the last statement completing the Psalm verse) suggests Trinitarian symbolism.

18

A

be thou, den Herrn, den the Lord, the

be thou, den Herrn, den the Lord, the

be thou, den Herrn, den the Lord, the

be thou, den Herrn, den the Lord, the

One complete statement of the psalm verse.

19

Herrn. den Her ren, mei ne See le. lo be, Lord, to God be praise, my spir it, praise thou,

Herrn, den Her ren, mei ne See le, lo be, Lord, to God be praise, my spir it, praise

Herrn, den Her ren, mei ne See le, lo be, Lord, to God be praise, my spir it, praise

Herrn, den Her ren, mei ne See le, lo be, Lord, to God be praise, my spir it, praise

B-flat major

23

be den Herrn,
thou the Lord,

be den Herrn.
thou the Lord,

be den Herrn,
thou the Lord,

lo be, lo be, lo be, lo be, lo be den Herrn,
praise thou, praise — thou, praise thou, praise — thou, praise thou the Lord,

Horns

B-flat major

26

mei ne See le!
O my spir it!

mei ne See le!
O my spir it!

mei ne See le!
O my spir it!

mei ne See le!
O my spir it!

Ritornello

B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

Corno I takes up the last soprano statement (with a slight modification at the cadence—stating the line as it was in the opening ritornello).

29

B-flat major

32

B-flat major

B-flat major

This is the first stanza of seven in the 1601 chorale "Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ" by Jakob Ebert (1549–1615). Earlier it was ascribed to Ludwig Helmbold (1532–1598).

Choral. (Mel: „Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ“.)

143/2. (Andante $\text{♩} = 66$.) (Chorale Verse 1) (See also 67/7, 116/1.) • Christ is our helper; we cry to God in Jesus' name (143/2).

For biblical background, see note.



1. Vin

Ritornello

B-flat major

3II

B-flat major

B-flat major

6 /16 Soprano.

Stollen 1 & 2 of chorale's bar form.

Double cadence.

B-flat major

B-flat major

B-flat major

G7

C minor

F7

B-flat major

G7

Allusion to Isaiah 9:6: To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Luther 1545: Friedfürst)." Allusion to John 14:13–14 [Jesus]: Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. (Also John 16:23–24.)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

9/19

1.

wahr'r Mensch und wah - rer Gott,
im Le - ben und im
true God but yet a man,
since ev - er time be -

C minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

11/21

2.

Tod;
gan;

Ritornello

B-flat major D7 G minor G7 C minor C minor C7

13II

14/24

Abgesang drum wir al - lein im Na - men dein
with loud ac - claim and in Thy Name

F major F major F7 B-flat major D7 G minor

16/26

zu dei - nem Va -
we ask Thy Fa -

G minor B-flat major F major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

18^{II} 19/29

ter schrei - en.
- ther's bless - ing.

Ritornello

B-flat major B-flat major

21 /31

23 /33

B-flat major

25 /35

B-flat major B-flat major

Secco
143/3. **Recitativo.** 1. Tenore. •Happy is he whose help is God of Jacob: Psalm 146:5 (143/3).

Wohl dem, dess Hil - fe der Gott Ja - kobs ist,
Blest he, who for his help hath Ja - cob's God,

Secco

E-flat major E-flat 7 B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

3

dess Hoffnung auf den Herrn, seinen Gott, ste-het.
whose hope is in the Lord and on God rest-eth.

B dim. C minor C minor

Aria.

143/4. (Adagio $\text{♩} = 56$.)

• National misfortune strikes other lands but not ours (143/4).

Ritornello
Strings

C minor

B dim.7

C7

F minor

B dim.7

F# dim.7

The movement is inventive enough to be considered Bach-like.

3.

G major C minor F minor 7 G7 A-flat major C minor

5. Tenore. Lines 1-2.

For biblical background, see note.

Tau-send-fa-ches Un-glück, Schrecken, Trübsal, Angst und schneller
Thou-sand-fold on o-ther-na-tions com-eth fear and sud-den

C minor

B dim.7

C7

F minor

B dim.7

F# dim.7

Tod,
death,

The text turns to the various misfortunes that can strike a land (including invading nations and privation) but in hopes that the New Year will bring blessing.

Note: Movements 4 and 6 have the same poetic structure: rhyme scheme ABABCC in trochaic meter with line lengths 8.7.8.7.7.7, and they both refer to the new year. They may originate from a preexisting poem. See Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:329-330, quoting Konrad Küster.

Ritornello

G major

C minor

A-flat major

C minor

Form (Rhyme ABABCC)
Rit (mm. 1-5) Cm
Lines 1-2 (5-7) Cm-Gm
Rit (7-9) Cm
Lines 3-4 (9-16) E b M-Gm
Rit (16-20) Gm
Lines 5-6 (20-28) E b M-Gm-Cm
Rit (28-32) Cm-CM

Vln I plays an obbligato of wide-ranging triplets with lower strings punctuating as if representing the unpredictability to be expected in the trudging passage of time. Chromatic harmonies depict "Tausendfaches Unglück, Schrecken, Trübsal, Angst und schneller Tod (thousandfold misfortune, terror, tribulation, fear, and sudden death)." Toward the end, 2 cadences on C major suggest hope among the vagaries of life.



Line 3-4 (with line 4 repeated, emphasizing "Sorgen" ("sorrows" or "cares")). NBA: sonst noch mehr

9
 Convoluted, angular melody depicts the various misfortunes listed.
 Völ - ker, die das Land be - dek - ken, Sor - gen und sonst mehr noch
 ev - ry - where are la - men - ta - tions, sor - rows which none com - fort -
 (i.e., invading nations)

11
 Noth, Sor - gen und sonst mehr noch Noth. Sor -
 eth, sor - rows which none com - fort - eth, sor -

13
 - gen, Sor - - - - gen, Sor - gen und sonst mehr noch
 - rows, sor - - - - rows, sor - rows which none com - fort -

15
 Noth, sonst mehr noch Noth
 eth, none com - fort - eth.

Ritornello

C minor E-flat major B-flat major B-flat major E7 A-flat major B-flat 7
 E-flat major E-flat major C7
 F minor D7 G minor C minor G minor
 C# dim.7 G minor G minor

In contrast to the difficulties experienced by "other lands," the poet expects a "Year of Blessing," a hopeful expectation that is musically emphasized with 2 fermatas. The phrase apparently alludes to Isaiah 61:1-2: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... (See also Jesus' reference to this passage in Luke 4:16-21.)

17

G7 C minor F# dim.7 C# dim.7 D minor G minor

19

Lines 5-6.

se - hen an - - -
Day by_ day_

F# dim.7 G minor G minor E-flat (7) A-flat major

21

- dre Län - der zwar, se - hen an - dre Län - der zwar, a - ber
their woes in - crease, day by day_ their woes in - crease, we a -

B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major A-flat major G7

23

wir ein Se - gensjahr, ein Se - gens - jahr, se - hen an - dre Län - der
lone are_ blest_ with peace, are_ blest with peace, day by_ day their woes in - -

Ritornello

C minor (G major) C minor

Fermata suggests hopeful anticipation for a "Year of Blessing."

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

25

zwar, a - ber wir ein Se - gens - jahr, ein Se - gensjahr, ein Se - gens -
crease, we a - lone are - blest with - peace, are blest with peace, are blest with -

C minor G major C major F minor

27

jahr, a - ber wir ein Se - gens - jahr.
peace, we a - lone are - blest with - peace.

D-flat major G7 C minor C minor

Ritornello

Two cadences on C major suggest hope among the vagaries of life.

Fermata suggests hopeful anticipation for a "Year of Blessing."

29

C7 F minor B dim.7 F# dim.7 G major

30^{II}

A-flat major C minor C major

Alfred Dürr notes that the "scoring of three horns and timpani, [recalls] 'Durch mächtige Kraft' from BWV 71, the Mülhhausen council election cantata of 1708 (which, however, has trumpets instead of horns), especially since the [triadic] figure "der Herr ist König (ewiglich)," which recurs several times (bb. 10, 27 and 29), resembles the setting of the opening words of that work, 'Gott ist mein König.' See Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 161–162. The energetic continuo bass is doubled by the bassoon (with a few departures).

143/5. (Allegro $\text{♩} = 100$.) • God of Zion is king forever: Psalm 146:10 (143/5).

Corno I, II, III, Timp

The movement has a limited harmonic vocabulary.

The repetitive character of the 16th-note run (and its frequent recurrence) point to the closing words "für und für" ("for ever and ever").

B-flat major

Basso.

Fanfare motive.

Der Herr ist Kö.

The Lord is reign.

nig,

Melisma on "König" is ("king") taken from the continuo line.

ing,

Corno II

Corno I

The bass is usually the voice of authority. Here he proclaims the Lord's majesty with a fanfare-like motive. 3 horns (unique in Bach) and timpani underscore the royal majesty of the Lord.

B-flat major

B-flat major

Corno I, imitated by Corno II, then Corno III

der Herr ist König

the Lord is reign-ing

Word painting: Sustained note followed by long melisma for "ewiglich" ("eternally").

B-flat major

Continuo

B-flat major

B-flat major

C major

F major

F major

- wig-lich, Corno I, II, III, Timp

- er - more,

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

20

dein Gott, Zi - - - - - on,
thy God, Zi - - - - - on,

Continuo

F(7) B-flat major

24

für — und für, — — — — —
ev - - - - - ry - where, — — — — —

der Herr ist König
the Lord is reign-ing

Fanfare motive in G minor

Corno I, II, III,
Timp

Bsn

D major G minor

Continuo

G minor

28

e - wiglich,
ev - - - - - er - more,

der Herr ist König
the Lord is reign-ing

Fanfare motive in F major

Corno I, II

Corno I echoed by
Corno II, then
III

F major B-flat major

B-flat 7

32

- wiglich,
- er - more,

dein Gott, Zi - - - - -
thy God, Zi - - - - -

Continuo

E-flat major

F7

B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

36

hemiola

on, für und für, für und
- on, ev - 'ry - where, ev - 'ry -

B-flat major

Bsn

40

Text painting: Long final note for "für und für" ("for ever and ever").

für.
where.

Corno I, II, III, Timp

B-flat major

B-flat major

44

+ Bsn

47

B-flat major

B-flat major

(Aria.)

143/6. (Lento ♩ = 60.) • New Year's prayer for protection and blessing (143/6).

1.

Ritornello

p Cont.

Bsn

Cont

Bsn

Cont 8va up

Bsn

G minor (For significance see note.)



The continuo and bassoon alternate with a descending quasi-ostinato figure, while upper strings play an untexted chorale tune in unison. Martin Petzoldt suggests that the juxtaposition of the passage of earthly time and God's eternal action. See Bach-Kommentar 2:332.

3

Tenore.

For biblical background, see note.

Je - su, Ret - ter dei - ner Her - de, blei - be fer - ner un - ser Hort. blei - be

Je - sus, Sa - viour of Thy peo - ple, be the guard - ian of us - all, be - the -

Cont

G minor

G minor

F7

B-flat major

B-flat major

6.

fer - ner un - ser Hort, Je - su, Ret - ter dei - ner

guard - ian - of us - all, Je - sus, Sa - viour of - Thy

Choral. (Mel: „Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ“.)

Ge - denk, Herr, jetzt - und

an dein Amt,

Her - de, blei - be fer - ner un - ser Hort, un - ser Hort, Je - su, Ret - ter - dei - ner

peo - ple, be - the guard - ian - of us - all, of us - all, Je - sus, Sa - viour - of Thy

Strings unison chorale.

D7

G minor

G minor

G minor

G7

Her - de, blei - be fer - ner un - ser Hort, un - ser Hort, Je - su, Ret - ter - dei - ner

peo - ple, be - the guard - ian - of us - all, of us - all, Je - sus, Sa - viour - of Thy

an dein Amt,

C minor

F# dim.7

D major

N6

F major

1011

Her - de, blei - be fer - ner un - ser

peo - ple, be - the guard - ian - of us

Long melisma with intermittent held notes for "bleibe" ("remain").

daß du ein Friedv - - - - - fürst

B-flat major

B-flat major

Martin Petzoldt argues that the third stanza of the chorale is implied here. The stanza emphasizes Christ as the Prince of Peace—an important consideration for the anticipated new year. The stanza is then sung in the following movement. See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:331–332.

15

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

13

Hort, *all* *bist*, dass dies *through this*

Ritornello

B-flat major G minor G minor

15II

Jahr unglücklich wer-de. glück-lich wer-de, dass dies Jahr uns
 year pre-serve us safe-ly, keep us safe-ly, through this year pre-

G minor F7 B-flat major G minor G minor

18

glücklich werde, glücklich werde, dass dies Jahr unglücklich werde, hal-te, hal-
 serve us safe-ly, keep us safe-ly through this year pre-serve us safe-ly, watch us, watch

h^{ilf} uⁿs g^{nä}-d^{ig} a^l-l^e

F7 B-flat major G7 C minor F7

21

Even longer melisma with intermittent held notes for "keep watch," intimating the length of the coming year.

samt ^{jetzt} und zu

B-flat major B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

24

te Wacht an je - dem Ort. hal - te Wacht an je - dem Ort. Füh'r, o
us well, lest ill - be - fall; watch us - well, lest ill be - fall; guard Thy

die - ser Frist.

D7 G minor D minor A7 D minor

26 II

Je - su, dei - ne Schar, führ', Je - su, dei - ne) Schar -
peo - ple, be - Thou near, O Je - sus, be Thou near -

Laß uns hin -

C7 F major F major F7

Long, ascending melisma of wide range for "deine Schar" ("thy throng"), suggesting the year-long duration of the requested blessing.

29

bis zu je - nem neu - en
all throughout this com - ing -

fort dein gött - lich Wort

B-flat major D7 G minor G7 C minor

"Bis zu jenem neuen Jahr" "until the next new year" is repeated 7 times. Since 7 symbolically represents completion, the prayer is that Christ will watch over the nation completely. Martin Petzoldt suggests that it also points to the Mosaic "Year of Jubilee." See Petzoldt, Bach-Kommentar 2:332.

32

Jahr, bis zu jenem neu - en Jahr, zu je - nem neu - en Jahr, zu je - nem neu - en
year, all throughout this com - ing year, throughout this com - ing -

im Fried noch län - ger

F# dim.7 D7 G minor F7 B-flat major

High note emphasizes the distance to the following year.

35

Jahr. zu je - - nem neuen Jahr, bis zu je-nem neu - en Jahr, zu je-nem neu-en
 year, throughout this- com-ing year, all throughout this com - ing year, through-out this- com-ing -

schal len.

G minor G minor

38

Jahr.
 year.

Ritornello

G minor G minor

Coro. (Chorale Verse 3) • Prayer that Christ act as Prince of Peace for us (143–7).

143/7. (Poco allegro $\text{♩} = 72$.)

Corno I, II

Corno Str

B-flat major

The closing chorus employs a limited harmonic vocabulary.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

4/25

Soprano.

Alto.

Tenore.

Basso.

Alfred Dürr writes, "In the closing chorus, no. 7, verse 3 of the same chorale is sung by the soprano, while alto, tenor, and bass form a lively contrapuntal texture to the word 'Alleluia,' surrounded and accompanied by instrumental figures. The instruments, however, neither participate in the substance of the chorale melody nor develop their own themes—a mode of composition that Bach scarcely used any more after 1714." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 162. It is noteworthy that the word "Halleluja" begins and ends Psalm 146 in Luther's translation. Thus the librettist joins two of the text sources (Psalm 146 and chorale).

Halle.lu - ja, _____
Hal - le - lu - ja, _____

Halle.lu - ja, _____
Hal - le - lu - ja, _____

Halle . lu -
Hal - le - lu -

tr

Strings

hemiola

mf

B-flat major

B-flat major

Corno up 8va

8/29

Hal . le - lu - ja, Hal . le - lu - ja, Hal . le - lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Hal . le - lu - ja, Hal . le - lu - ja, Hal . le - lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

ja, Hal . le - lu - ja. Hal . le - lu -
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Corni tacet.

B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

This is the final stanza of seven in the 1601 chorale "Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ" by Jakob Ebert (1549–1615). Earlier it was ascribed to Ludwig Helmbold (1532–1598).

Lines 1, 3.

NBA: jetzund

11 /32 Choral. (Mel: „Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ“)

Stollen of chorale's bar form.

Ge - denk' Herr Je - su,
und hilf uns gnä - dig
Be - think Thee, Je - sus,
and to Thy peo - ple,

ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

B-flat major B-flat major G7

14 /35

an dein Amt,
al - le - samt
of Thy charge,
far and wide,

ja. Hal - le - lu - ja,
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,

ja. Hal - le - lu - ja,
ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,

Corno I, II, III, Timp. Srings Corno I, II

C minor F7 B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

18 / 39

Lines 2, 4. NBA: jetztund

dass du ein Fried - fürst
jetzt und zu die - ser
the Prince of Peace Thou
Thy sav - ing Grace im -

Hal - le - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Hal - le - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Hal - le - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Strings

mf

B-flat major

I. (21) /42
 2.

bist, Frist;
 art, part;

ja, ja,
 ja, ja,

ja, ja,
 ja, ja,

ja, ja,
 ja, ja,

Corno I, II, III, Timp

ja, Corno I, II, III, Timp

B-flat major B-flat major D major G minor

Corno I up 8va

23 /44

A Lines 5-6.

Abgesang

lass uns hin - fort dein
so may we hear Thy

Hal-le-lu - ja, _____
Hal - le - lu - ja, _____

Hal-le-lu - ja, _____ Hal-le-lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, _____ Hal - le - lu -

Hal-le-lu - ja, _____ Hal-le-lu -
Hal - le - lu - ja, _____ Hal - le - lu -

Strings

A

hemiola

mf

Corno I, II, III, Timp

C(7) **F major** **F major** **B-flat major**

22

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 143

NBA: schallen

31/52

Fried' noch län - ger hö -
 songs of peace re - sound -

Halle - lu - ja. Halle - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

ja, Halle - lu - ja, Halle - lu - ja,
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,

le - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja, Halle - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Continuo

34 /55 G minor

F7

B-flat major

- - - - - ren.
 ing.

ja. Halle - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja.
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja.
 Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

ja. Halle - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja.
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

Corno I, II, III, Timp

B-flat major

B-flat major

38 /59

hemiola

B-flat major B-flat major B-flat major