# = Preise , Jerusalem , den Herrn , BWV 119 =

Preise , Jerusalem , den Herrn ( Praise the Lord , Jerusalem ) , BWV 119 , is a sacred cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed it in Leipzig for Ratswechsel , the inauguration of a new town council , and first performed it on 30 August 1723 .

Bach composed the cantata in his first year as Thomaskantor in Leipzig , about three months after taking office at the end of May 1723 . A festive service at the Nikolaikirche was an annual event , celebrating the inauguration of a new town council , always held on the Monday after St. Bartholomew ( August 24 ) . The text by an anonymous poet includes psalm verses and an excerpt from Martin Luther 's German Te Deum . It is focused on acknowledgement of authority as a gift of God , thanks for past blessings , and prayer for future help .

The cantata is structured in nine movements , three of them choral ( 1 , 7 , 9 ) , the others alternating arias and recitatives . The orchestra is large and representative , with four trumpets , timpani , two recorders and three oboes , in addition to strings and basso continuo . Bach led the Thomanerchor in the first performance .

In 2015 the cantata was performed by the Thomanerchor at the place of its premiere on 12 June , opening the Bachfest and celebrating both the 1000th anniversary of the first recorded mention of Leipzig and the 850th anniversary of the Nikolaikirche .

## = = History and words = =

As Thomaskantor , Bach served as music director of Leipzig and had to compose not only for music in the four major churches but also for public municipal functions . The Ratswechsel was celebrated with an annual church service at the Nikolaikirche on the Monday after St. Bartholomew , August 24 . It was not a democratic election , but a " ceremonial transfer of office " of council members who were appointed . The service was not part of the liturgical year with cantata texts related to prescribed biblical epistle and gospel readings . For the Ratswechsel service , Bach could count on the entire council ( his employer ) listening , and probably also civil servants and representatives of the Elector 's administration for the region . The musicologist Klaus Hofmann notes : " It was an opportunity for Bach to show how sacred music was flourishing under his direction and to present himself as a composer . "

The cantata was Bach 's first for the occasion in Leipzig . Early in his career he had written at least one cantata for the equivalent service at Mühlhausen . There are five surviving cantatas for the Ratswechsel at Leipzig , and librettos of three more , BWV Anh . I 3 , 4 and 193 . The other four extant cantatas are Ihr Tore zu Zion , BWV 193 , composed for the occasion in 1727 but partly lost , Wir danken dir , Gott , wir danken dir , BWV 29 , composed for the occasion in 1731 , Gott , man lobet dich in der Stille , BWV 120 , adapted from earlier cantatas for wedding and homage probably in 1742 , and Lobe den Herrn , meine Seele , BWV 69 , adapted from Lobe den Herrn , meine Seele , BWV 69a , for the occasion in 1748 .

The text was written by an unknown librettist who included psalm verses ( 147 , 85 and 126 ) and lines from Martin Luther 's German Te Deum " Herr Gott , dich loben wir " . To suit the event for which it was written , these are all turned into hymns of thanking and praising God for Leipzig 's prosperity and asking him to protect the city in the future .

Bach led the Thomanerchor in the performance on 30 August 1723 .

## = = Scoring and structure = =

Bach structured the cantata in nine movements with choral movements as a frame and in movement 7 , otherwise alternating recitatives and arias . He scored it for four vocal soloists ( soprano ( S ) , alto ( A ) , tenor ( T ) and bass ( B ) ) , a four @-@ part choir , and an orchestra of four trumpets ( Tr ) , timpani ( Ti ) , two recorders ( Fl ) , three oboes ( Ob ) , two of them also playing oboes da caccia ( Oc ) , two violins ( Vl ) , viola ( Va ) , and basso continuo ( Bc ) .

In the following table of the movements , the scoring follows the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe . The

keys and time signatures are taken from the Bach scholar Alfred Dürr , using the symbol for common time ( 4 / 4 ) . The instruments are shown separately for winds and strings , while the continuo , playing throughout , is not shown .

= = Music = =

Even among other festive music written by Bach , this work 's scoring for four trumpets is unusual . It is characterised by a very solemn character and the attributes of courtly homage music , such as the opening chorus in the form of a French overture or fanfare @-@ like trumpet interjections in the bass recitative . Bach created a work that in musical terms corresponds less to sacred music and more to the type of secular music for a princely court , as had been required of him during his time in office in Köthen . Only in its final two movements does Bach again use simple forms to emphasize the work 's character of a church cantata , implying that earthly powers do not last , but God ? the supreme ruler ? is entitled to have the last word .

= = = 1 = = =

The cantata opens with a French overture , unusual in featuring the chorus in the faster middle section . At the time of Louis XIV an overture in this style was played when the king and his entourage entered a performance . Bach 's music expresses a similar respect for the authority of the town councils . The mostly homophonic slow opening is in the typical dotted rhythms , and shows a remarkable concerto of the trumpets versus the rest of the orchestra . The chorus appears only in the middle section , proclaiming verses from Psalm 147 , " Preise , Jerusalem , den Herrn " ( Praise the Lord , Jerusalem ) . It uses both fugal techniques and paired entries . The coda is a recapitulation of the first section . Analysis of corrections show that Bach probably used an instrumental piece composed earlier , and that the characteristic upward run on the first word " Preise " was added later . The text from psalm 147 @,@ 12 ? 14a addresses Jerusalem , but the Leipzig congregation understood it as their city .

= = = 2 = = =

A secco recitative introduces the topic , " Gesegnet Land , glückselge Stadt " ( Blessed land , fortunate city ) : a town is blessed if God reigns in it .

= = = 3 = = =

The oboes da caccia present a dotted @-@ rhythm ritornello to introduce the tenor aria . The vocal entry is before the ritornello cadence , " Wohl dir , du Volk der Linden " ( Good fortune , you people of the lindens ) , a reference to Leipzig sometimes being called Lindenstadt .

= = = 4 = = =

The bass recitative , " So herrlich stehst du , liebe Stadt ! " ( So gloriously you stand , dear city ! ) , is introduced and concluded with a fanfare @-@ like trumpet and timpani line , further wind instruments , recorders and oboes da caccia add colour to the middle section , in an unusual movement for the Leipzig congregation .

= = = 5 = = =

The alto aria , " Die Obrigkeit ist Gottes Gabe " ( Authority is God 's gift ) , is accompanied by two obbligato recorders in unison . It is the only minor @-@ mode movement of the cantata . The obbligato presents high repeated notes beginning midway through the ritornello theme , which recurs as episodes and at the conclusion of the movement . The movement is , in effect , a trio

sonata .

=== 6 ===

A soprano recitative , " Nun ! Wir ekennen es und bringen dir " ( Now ! we acknowledge it and bring to You ) , expresses thanks for God 's gift and acknowledgement of the burden on the people serving as town council , those who did it the last year and those who succeed .

=== 7 ===

A choral movement confirms " Der Herr hat Guts an uns getan " ( The Lord has done good things for us ) . The movement is structured like a da capo aria , with a fugue in the opening and repeat , while the contrasting middle section is mostly homophonic . A a long ritornello theme features an " imperious " trumpet melody , which is played four times during the movement . The voices enter from the lowest to the highest , then additional instruments lead to a climax . In the middle section motifs from the ritornello are played " above and between " the voices . One fanfare motif appears also in Bach 's first Brandenburg Concerto and would later be used in the bass aria Großer Herr und starker König in the Christmas Oratorio . The Bach scholar Klaus Hofmann assumes , reflecting its secular character as a hunting signal and fanfare , that the movement is derived from an earlier homage cantata .

=== 8 ===

A very short alto recitative , " Zuletzt ! Da du uns , Herr , zu deinem Volk gesetzt " ( Finally ! Since You have established us as Your people ) , is harmonically " adventurous " .

=== 9 ===

The cantata ends with the ninth stanza from Luther 's German Te Deum , " Hilf deinem Volk , Herr Jesu Christ " ( Help Your people , Lord Jesus Christ ) , a prayer for further help and preservation . It is a four @-@ part setting " with the subtlest touches of flamboyance " in a chorale . No performance material for the cantata has survived ; and the score , where the last two movements appear in free space within movement 7 , provides only the four @-@ part setting without mentioning which instruments would play with which voice . Hofmann imagines that there might have been additional parts for trumpets and timpani for an ending to match the opening of the cantata .

== Selected recordings ==

The sortable table are excerpt from the selection on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website . Choirs and orchestras are grouped roughly :
Large choirs ( red background ) : Bach ( choir dedicated to Bach 's music , founded in the mid @-@ 20th century ) , Boys ( choir of all male voices )
Medium @-@ size choirs
Large orchestras ( red background ) : Bach ( orchestra dedicated to Bach 's music , founded in the mid @-@ 20th century ) , Symphony
Orchestra on period instruments ( green background )

== 2015 ==

The cantata was performed in the opening concert of the Bachfest Leipzig on 12 June 2015 , celebrating 1000 years since the first recorded mention of Leipzig and the 850th anniversary of the Nikolaikirche . A line from the libretto was the festival 's motto for the occasion : " So herrlich stehst

du , liebe Stadt ! " ( So gloriously you stand , dear city ! ) . The cantata was performed at the Nikolaikirche by Ute Selbig , Britta Schwarz , Patrick Grahl , Jochen Kupfer , the Thomanerchor and the Händelfestspielorchester Halle , conducted by Gotthold Schwarz .