

For this final project, I chose to analyze the closing fugue from J.S Bach’s Motet, *Singet dem Herrn*. After carefully and meticulously working through the piece I have settled on the conclusion that every note and measure is one of a few specific items. These included a direct quote of either the subject or countersubject, or one of the few important motives I chose to label. Since quite literally everything can be labeled, and since this fugue was not overly complicated, I chose to go through and label each note and motive with their corresponding identifier. Furthermore, the fugue is in 3/8 time, so I chose to give each measure three cells on my analysis. This was so I was able to accurately label everything down to the eighth note. This meticulousness revealed several interesting characteristics and helped in my comparison of this work to others.

I used the following labels to identify the melodic and motivic material: subject, countersubject, answer, subject material, countersubject material, a rhythmic X motive, a rhythmic Y motive, and finally incomplete subject entries which are contained in the subject material sections. The motives X and Y are listed below.

Motive X	Motive Y
 Hal - le - lu - ja,	 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!
Excerpt from measure 43 in the soprano voice	Excerpt from measure 47 in the tenor voice

While these motives are also not the most complicated of material, they are the only instances that are not direct quotes from the subject or countersubject. They are also the most utilized non-

subject material that occurs. This is especially true during the episodes and sometimes during the middle entries in the voices that do not have the subject or countersubject.

At first glance, the chart is quite busy which confirms that in fact, each note is a derivative of one of the above labels. The most predominant being the label: subject material (SM), which is labeled as purple. Sometimes these sections are simply labeled as SM, while others are labeled SME. Often, a section of subject material will either start with, or contain, an incomplete entry of the subject. A great example of this is in measure thirty-three in the soprano or alto part. Each of these voices starts with an identical subject head but stops before completing the subject. Moments like this are present throughout the entire work and imitate mock-stretto sections throughout the piece. Even during episodes altered and incomplete subject entries are throughout. I chose not to label them differently than subject material because they often go in and out of this material all within a single section. For that reason, anything that resembles subject material is labeled in purple while the entries of the incomplete subject are marked within those purple sections as SME. This E stands for entry to distinguish when an incomplete subject entry occurs rather than simply borrowed subject material.

Something that I found interesting was the tonal ambiguity of the subject. Often it appeared that the subject started in one key and cadenced in another. While the key that the subject cadences in is always a closely related key, and while some may even claim the entire subjects are in those cadencing keys, the tonal feel of the beginning of the subject often does not match those that it cadences in. Often this is as simple as a I-V relationship, and although this is a seamless transition, I still struggled with how to label the keys of each subject. I chose to simply go with the key in which they cadenced. The middle entries are labeled within each

individual voice. They indicate the cadencing key of each middle entry. Rather than labeling the sections, I have labeled the entries individually.

When looking at some of the underlying meaning of the fugue, it is important to consult the text. With the other fugues this semester, we have not had to do this because we have not analyzed fugues with texts. In my experience, Bach in particular is very creative with his use of text. One fabulous example of this is in Bach's Magnificat. In the final movement, on the text "Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper", which translates to, "As it was in the beginning, is now," Bach used the music from the opening movement as a sort of pun on the sacred Latin text. While this fugue does not have as blatant textual characteristics it is important to note the translation. The text for this movement as follows:

Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten, lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit! Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn. Halleluja!	Praise the Lord for his mighty deeds, praise him according to his excellent greatness. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Alleluia! ¹
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I find many interesting things about the text of this movement. First and foremost, the treatment of the placement of the fugue. The fugal texture begins with a transition to 3/8 meter starting on the text "Alles, was Oden hat, lobe den Herrn". Interestingly Bach employs this same texture change in his Cantata 190 which shares the exact same text. Consider the two subjects below. One is from the Motet Singet dem Herrn which I analyzed and another is from his Cantata 190 Singet dem Herrn.

¹ "Bach Motet Translations BWV 225 - 'Singet Dem Herrn Ein Neues Lied,'" Emmanuel Music, accessed May 1, 2020, http://www.emmanuelmusic.org/notes_translations/translations_cantata/t_bwv225.htm)

Bach Motet: Singet dem Herrn

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Score for three voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and four-part harmony. The music is in 3/8 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are: "Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!". The score includes a piano introduction and a repeat sign.

Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Ta-ten, lo-bet, lo-bet, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen, sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Ta-ten, lo-bet, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit! Al

Herrn in sei-nen Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Herrn in sei-nen Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Herrn in sei-nen Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit!

Herrn in sei-nen Ta-ten, lo-bet ihn in sei-ner gro-ßen Herr-lich-keit! Al

les, was O - - - dem hat, lo-be den Herrn, Hal-le-lu-

Al -

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les, was O - - - dem hat, lo-be den Herrn, Hal-le-lu-

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

Bach Cantata: Singet dem Herrn

[illegible]

What is interesting is that both of these fugues share several characteristics. They are both in a triple meter. They both first introduce the fugal texture on this exact line of text. They both have the subjects entering starting with the bass voice and ascending to the soprano voice.

² “Motets BWV 225-231,” BachCantatas.com, accessed May 1, 2020, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Vocal/BWV225-231.htm>)

³ “Cantata BWV 190.” BachCantatas.com. Accessed May 1, 2020. <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/BWV190.htm>.

They even share the repeated three-note pattern on the words “Alles, was”. I find these similarities far from coincidental. I believe that Bach thought that this structure worked well for the text and decided to utilize them in both situations.

This text was also clearly important to Bach and many other composers. The primary name of the Motet, “Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied”, or “Sing to the Lord a New Song”, is an encouragement for many composers to do something special with this “new song”. This was clearly the case for Bach and this idea is expanded upon by John Eliot Gardener stating that “Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied might be the meatiest, most technically demanding of Bach’s double-choir motets.”⁴ He then goes on to discuss the work and its components. When talking about the fugue Gardener writes the following, “Only in the ‘Cum sancto spirito’ of the B minor Mass (which it resembles) did Bach ever write a more joyous, fleet-footed fugal subject.”⁵ Gardener truly believes that this is some of the most intimate and special music that Bach composed.

Another interesting resource pointed out the similarities between the fugue of Bach’s Motet Singet dem Herrn and the fugue in the Sanctus of B minor Mass. This Fugue has a different text but there are some clear similarities. Consider the two subjects of these fugues.

⁴ John Eliot Gardiner, liner notes to Bach Motets, Monteverdi Choir, John Eliot Gardiner, SDG 716, CD, 2011. (p. 11)

⁵ John Eliot Gardiner, liner notes to Bach Motets, Monteverdi Choir, John Eliot Gardiner, SDG 716, CD, 2011. (p. 11-12)

Herrn, even though a complete set of vocal performing parts exists.”⁸ This is unfortunate.

Although through deduction I believe that a close to accurate performance can and has been created, this needs to be done carefully and with the consultation of other pieces by Bach before definitively deciding what the instruments should be playing. Analyzing the texture of several of Bach’s other works, especially the ones compared in this project will shed light on what is appropriate. Dr. Thomas elaborates stating: “The use of doubling instruments was a common practice in choral works from both the Renaissance and Baroque eras. In larger works (cantatas, passions, masses, etc.) it is rare to find vocal (choral) passages that are not doubled by instruments.”⁹ For this reason, I believe that the recordings done by both Gardiner and Thomas are historically accurate as they utilized this colla parte style of instrumentation.

Overall, I believe this work to be a thrilling masterful representation of Bach’s choral fugues. The sheer technical ability and the thematic material support the idea that this music was truly special for Bach. In addition, his masterful use of only subject, countersubject, and simple motivic material proves his ability to do so much with so little.

⁸ Jeffrey Thomas, liner notes to Bach: Motets for Double Chorus, American Bach Soloists, Jefferey Thomas, American Bach Soloists, No label ID number, CD, 2017

⁹ Jeffrey Thomas, liner notes to Bach: Motets for Double Chorus, American Bach Soloists, Jefferey Thomas, American Bach Soloists, No label ID number, CD, 2017

Consulted Works

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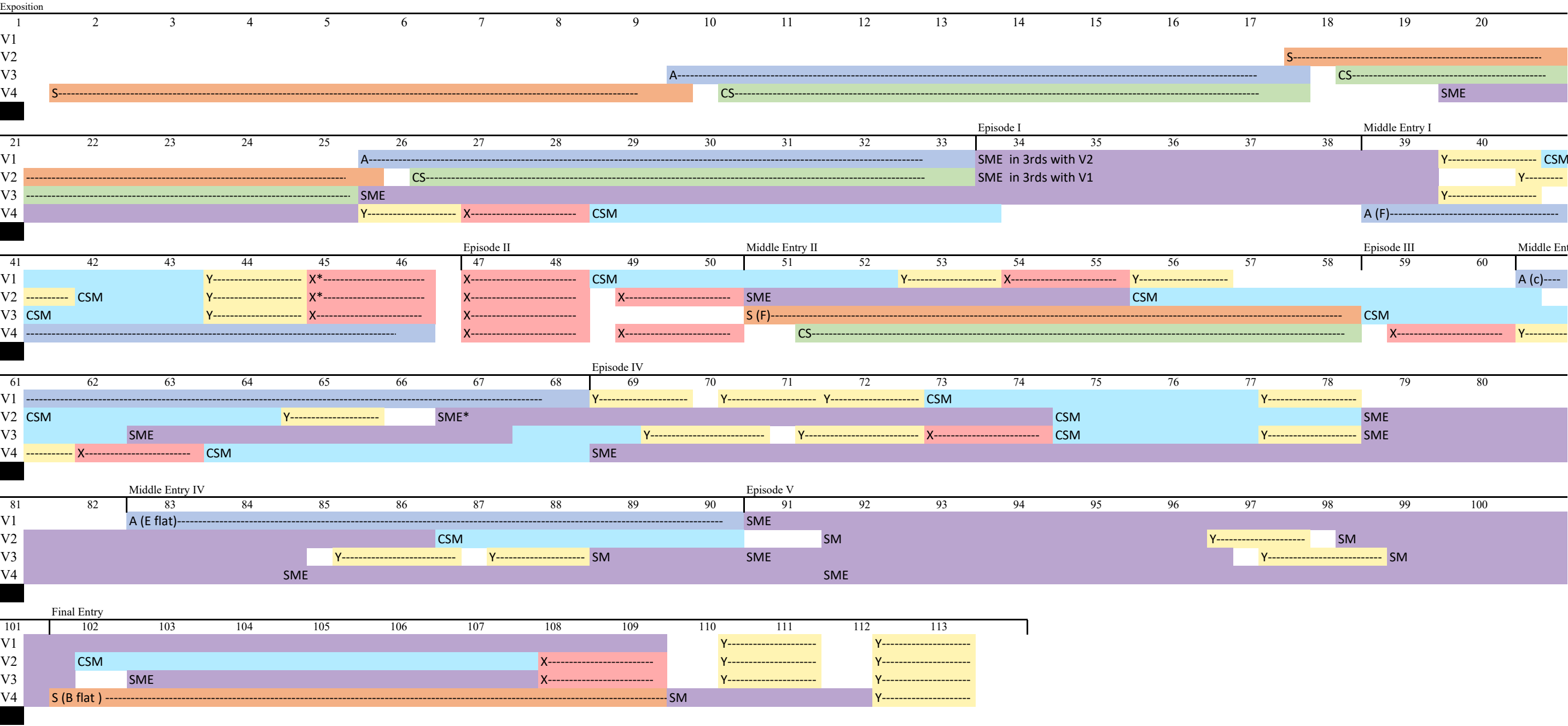
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Bach Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied

Fugue from Movment III: Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn, Halleluja!



- S = Subject
- CS = Countersubject
- A = Answer
- SM = Subject Material
- CSM = Countersubject Material
- X = Motive
- Y = Motive
- SME = Incomplete Subject Entry within Subject Material
- SME* = Close to complete Entry (Mock Stretto)

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Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Ta - ten, lo - bet, lo - bet, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen, sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Ta - ten, lo - bet, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit! Al

Herrn in sei - nen Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Herrn in sei - nen Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Herrn in sei - nen Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit!

Herrn in sei - nen Ta - ten, lo - bet ihn in sei - ner gro - ßen Herr - lich - keit! Al

Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu -

Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu -

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

Al - -

- - les, was O - - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu -

ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - les,

ja! Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal -

- - les, was O - - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, al - les was

ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - les, was

al - - les, was O - dem hat, lo - - be den Herrn, al - les, al -

le - lu - ja Hal - le - ju - ja!

O - - dem hat, lo - - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,

O - - dem hat, lo - - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

- les, was O - - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,

Al - - - - les, was O -

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Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja,
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - -
 Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - -
 - - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

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Hal - le - ju - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!
 - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 - - les, was O - - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, lo - - be den
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -

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Al - - - les, was O - - - dem hat,
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - -
 Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - - - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja Hal -

lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - ju - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 - - - - les, was O - - - - dem hat, lo - be den
 8 Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 le - lu - ja! Al - - - - les, was O - dem hat, lo -

ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!
 8 Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - les, was O - dem hat,
 ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja! Al - les, was O - dem hat,
 - - - - be den Herrn, al - les, al - les, was O -

Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den
 lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 8 lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu -
 - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den

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Herrn, al - - - les, was O - - -

ja! Al - les, al - - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja!

ja! Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - - - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu -

Herrn, al - - - les, was O - - -

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- dem hat, lo - - be den Herrn, al - les, al - - - les, was O -

Al - les, was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja,

ja! Was O - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, al - - - les, was O - dem hat,

- - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, al - - - les, was O -

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- dem hat, lo - - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

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

lo - be den Herrn, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

- - dem hat, lo - be den Herrn, Hal - - - le - lu - ja!