# Genesis 9:1-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gen/gen-9/genesis-91-4/>

God blessed Noah instructing him and his sons to be fruitful and multiply. God put a fear of mankind into all the animals. God allows mankind to eat meat along with plants.

In verse 1, God blessed Noah and his sons in a verbal manner; God said to them. At the end of the creation account, God blessed Adam and his family ([Genesis 1:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.28&t=NASB95)). Almost verbatim, at the end of the flood account, God blessed Noah and his sons. This is the third time God has blessed mankind ([Genesis 1:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.28&t=NASB95); [5:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+5.2&t=NASB95)). God tells Noah and his family to 1) be fruitful 2) multiply and 3) fill the earth. This also is the third time in the Bible man has been told to “be fruitful and multiply”. God told Noah to be fruitful and multiply when they first came off the ark ([Genesis 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+8.17&t=NASB95)) and now repeats the command a second time. God also told Adam to be fruitful and multiply in [Genesis 1:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.28&t=NASB95). It is clearly God’s blessing for the earth to bear a growing population, which means the earth’s capacity to provide for humans should also be expanded. God has never overturned this command.

God puts a fear of man into the animals, saying the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky. This implies that before the flood animals did not fear humans. Now that humans are given to eat animals, it is important for animals to fear man so they can survive. Their fear can also involve hostility toward humans, that they might protect themselves if threatened. But their preference will be to steer clear, which helps reduce the potential for attacks on humans, so humanity can survive.

Animals who were once at peace with mankind before the flood now would be afraid of man from this time forward. Mankind would have the power or authority of life and death over the animals for food. God says that with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given to eat. This is a very broad grant, and includes every moving thing that is alive now shall be food for you. God grants all the animals as food as I gave the green plant.

 During creation, God said that the whole vegetable world should be man’s food ([Genesis 1:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.29&t=NASB95)). Mankind was originally a vegetarian. In verse 3, God declares that man can eat every moving thing; all animals, fish or birds to supplement a diet of grains, fruits, and vegetables. Perhaps the earth was less productive agriculturally because of the ecological changes. Many animals can digest grass and convert it to energy, which humans cannot do. Perhaps with the substantially diminished productivity of the land, humans now needed to be able to eat the meat of the grass eaters in order to obey the command to be fruitful and multiply.

But whatever the reason, God gave man permission to eat meat. Meat eating was an important part of the human diet after the flood. God gave specific instructions in eating the meat which likely was required for human flourishing. The first limitation was that the grant was limited to every moving thing that is alive. The animals had to be alive then be killed before it was to be food for them. Mankind was not to eat from animals that had died of natural causes or were killed by wild beasts. This instruction would help humans avoid diseases from eating rotting flesh.

In verse 4 the second stipulation was they shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Meat must be drained and not have life-blood in it. It was not to be eaten raw and bloody. The life is in the blood and that life comes from God. One must first drain the blood from a slain animal, which was later required in the Mosaic law ([Deuteronomy 12:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+12.24&t=NASB95)). One reason for this rule could be that blood carries diseases so the physical properties of eating flesh with blood in it could be bad.

The Bible later explains another reason to avoid eating meat with blood. Blood is the symbol of life, it belongs to God, as does life itself. “For the life of every creature is in its blood” ([Leviticus 17:11a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+17.11a&t=NASB95)). The blood represented sacred life and was always offered in sacrifices to God. God atoned for human sin through the blood sacrifices. In the sacrificial atonement system of the Old Testament, the substitution of the animal’s life was represented by the shed blood. It was offered in place of the sinner’s life who thereby averted divine judgment by the sacrifice ([Leviticus 17:11b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+17.11b&t=NASB95)). To shed blood represented death, therefore, a person or animal dies when the blood is removed.

A third reason that God may have given this command is to stave off worship later developed by the pagans. Blood contained the life-essence; therefore, pagans came to believe that one could renew or reinforce one’s vitality by consuming their blood. During pagan worship, they would drink blood to take on the properties of the soul of the blood that they were drinking. Pagans thought they could gain the power of an animal through its blood, such as speed or courage. Cannibals generally ate their enemies for the same reason, to gain their power. Today, some butchers still follow special rules in order that the meat may be entirely free from blood (called Kosher meat).

**Biblical Text**

**1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 “The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. 3 “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. 4 “Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.**