

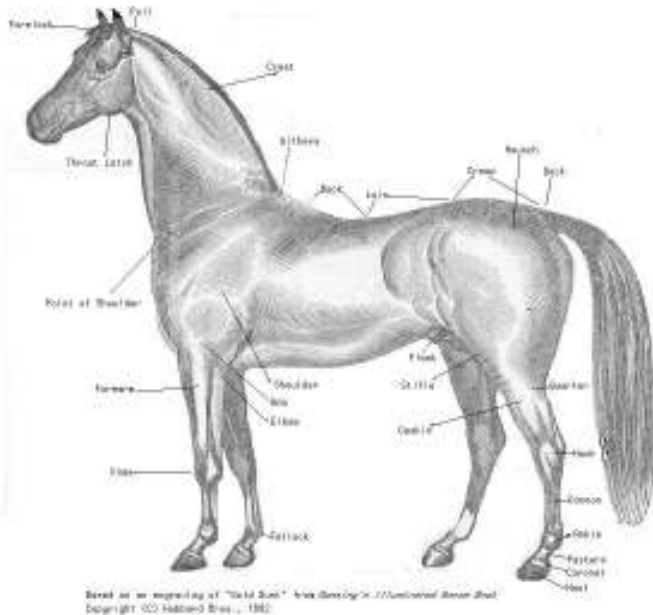
CREATURES OF THE CREATOR

Part Three: The Horse

If one were to choose an animal that has had the most influence on people and nations over the course of history, it would be difficult not to select the horse. The horse has been used (among many other things) for war, work, and recreation. The horse has been a loyal companion at man's side for centuries.

The Species

The scientific name for the horse is *Equus caballus*. Horses today are generally domesticated, although there are still some wild horses in various parts of the world. The size of a horse is measured in *hands* from the ground to the withers. A hand is 101.6 mm. Horses smaller than 14.2 hands (58 inches) when fully mature are considered ponies.



Popular breeds of smaller riding horses are the Arabians, Morgans, and Quarter Horses. They generally range from 14 to 16 hands high and weigh between 850 and 1200 pounds. Larger riding horses like Thoroughbreds might be 17 hands and the heavy draft horses like Clydesdales can measure 18 hands and weight up to 2000 pounds.

Largest Horse – The world's largest horse (named Sampson) was born in England in 1846. He was 21 ½ hands high (7 ft 2 ½ in). His weight was estimated at over 3,300 pounds. He was a Shire Horse, which is a breed of draft horse. If the man to the right is about six feet tall, Sampson would have been nearly a foot taller than the horse pictured!



A Shire Horse (not Sampson)



Smallest Horse –

The world's smallest horse is Thumbelina. She is a dwarf measuring 17 inches and weighing 60 pounds. Thumbelina travels around the country visiting children. She was

bred on a farm that raises miniature horses, but being a dwarf, she is smaller than the miniatures.

Senses – While horses have a very good sense of smell (better than humans), their eyesight is noteworthy. Only the ostrich has a larger eye than the horse. Because of the way the eye is positioned,

horses have a 350° field of vision. They can nearly see in a full circle without turning their heads! They also have excellent vision at night, but research indicates that they do not see the variety of colors that humans can see.

Sleep Patterns – Horses can sleep lightly standing up and deeply lying down. They require about 2 ½ hours of sleep each 24 hour period. Usually they get their sleep in short intervals (15 minutes or so) rather than one longer block of time. They have to lie down for an hour or two every two days in order to meet their "deep sleep" requirements (something equivalent to REM sleep in humans). If a horse is not allowed over several days it can become sleep deprived and collapse into deep sleep while standing.

Interesting Uses – Horses are being used to help people recover from mental illness (Equine-assisted psychotherapy). There are also programs that give prison inmates the opportunity to care for horses, helping to prepare them for life on the outside. These are both very new fields of application.

Horses In the Bible



The horse is an extremely important Biblical animal and there are many passages which make note of the horse. Look at some of the more striking references below and discuss them.

Exodus 15:1 *Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.*

What is the context of this verse? How were the horses being used? How was God keeping His promises by delivering Israel from these horses? How does this deliverance affect *us*?

1 Kings 4:26 *Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.*

Who was Solomon? Why did he become so wealthy?

Ezra 2:66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules.

What is Ezra 2 all about? Why do you think God chose to record the number of horses here?

Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

What would be some modern-day equivalents of "trusting in horses"?

Zechariah 9:9-11 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

How did Jesus fulfill these prophecies?

For further study, find references to horses in the New Testament.

Resources

<http://members.tripod.com/~KHH18/horse3.jpg>
http://access.nscpcdn.com/gallery/i/w/wnew_thumbelina/horse1.jpg
http://pilgrim.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/images/n/f/76176_12.jpg
<http://www.worldssmallesthorse.com/>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horses>