

## God Created Horses to Serve Us and to Be Our Companions

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Horses are mentioned a total of 154 times in the Bible, but how many readers have heard at least one sermon on horses? Revelation 19 reads, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness, he judges.” Elijah was taken up to heaven in a horse-driven chariot (II Kings 2:11). Are there horses in heaven? Why was eating horse meat forbidden (Lev. 11:4)? Was it due to the Israelites’ great respect for horses? Or for other reasons? To understand the meaning of these scriptures requires some study on topics that should be considered in sermons.

Another reason exists to learn about horses. The Gospel includes God's revelation revealed in His **word**, the Bible, and His **works**, his creation (Revelation 14:6-7). The Bible mentions His works in over 120 different species of animals. In fact, knowledge about horses reveals a great deal about God and His will for us. A study of horses’ design, temperament, variety, gentleness, intelligence, and loving personality documents that they were created specifically to be companions and hard workers for humans. No other animal meets these requirements.

No other animal can carry an adult man while running at 40 mph for 2 to 3 miles before fatigue sets in. Horses can run at high speeds much longer than most of their enemies. The reason they can do this is, in contrast to most animals and humans, horses can burn calories without requiring oxygen. Think about this next time you are out of breath due to running or hard work. How they achieve this feat is still being debated.

These obligate nasal breathers typically take around 12 breaths per minute, moving about 60 liters of air each minute when at rest. When galloping, the blood-vessel blood pressure in the horse's lungs is 4-5 times greater than when at rest. If opened and laid flat, their lung airways would cover ten tennis courts! Their body organs act like pistons, allowing horses to rely on passive breathing while galloping. Extending their neck, then lowering it in a gallop, pushes/pulls their organs against their diaphragm, producing respiration.

Horses have unique shock-absorber hooves that allow them to carry heavy loads for long distances while running. They have close to 360-degree vision; vision that is better at night than humans, allowing them to safely carry passengers on a dark night.

In contrast to most animals, a horse's diet consists primarily of coarse grasses. For this reason, they can feed in almost every part of the continent except barren deserts and areas covered yearlong with snow. One unique design that allows them to do this is their teeth never stop growing, a trait that helps them counter the wear caused by their gritty diet.

The 400 horse breeds come in scores of colors from white to black, and every combination in-between. The largest known horse breed is the Shire horse breed, which are also known as gentle giants. In contrast to their impressive size and appearance, Shire horses are a very docile breed. In addition to their well-balanced nature, they are very reliable and form close relationships with their owner and rider. They weigh from 1,800 to 2,400 pounds.

The smallest horse breed known—the Falabella of Argentina—is about 30 inches tall, the size of a small-sized dog, and weighs around 50 pounds. The enormous variety of horses allows them to live in both very hot and very cold climates. The Arctic horse breed is adapted to extreme cold due to its long coat of thick hair, short legs, and lean muscle, plus a layer of fat to insulate their body.

The desert horse breed is adapted to 120°F day-desert heat by having short hair allowing effective dissipation of heat. Other traits that allow them to live in desert heat include their long ears, long legs, and large nostrils which help to cool the body.

Job 39:19-21 says, "Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with a mane? . . . He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; he gallops into the clash of arms. He mocks at fear, and is not frightened. He devours the distance

with fierceness and rage; nor does he stand firm because the trumpet has sounded.”

Genesis 2:18 teaches, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help mate.” God made a companion for man (woman) but He *also made the perfect companion for both men and women, a horse*. Horses are very social animals (close to dogs). There is no such thing as a wild horse. Most horses can be tamed in a day by a skilled trainer. A 50-pound, 5-year-old girl can easily control a 1,200-pound horse. Their 117 facial muscles makes them excellent communicators using their winsome expressions.

Therapy horses are valued to help persons with a wide variety of conditions cope with life such as autism. They are important in substance abuse treatment, and to help abused women move forward with their life. Horses have been used for therapy since the second century A.D. Accounts of horses' curative physical, emotional, and psychosocial qualities in treating patients date as far back as 5 B.C. They are also critical in helping war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, to adjust to civilian life. Horses are a gift from our Creator that has served as a loving companion and tireless worker that has enabled us to travel long distances for the past 6,000 years.

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