

Why Does the Bible Mention Unicorns?

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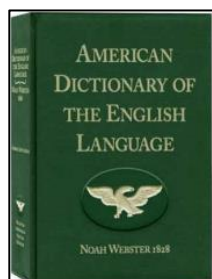
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God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. -Numbers 23:22

Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? -Job 39:9

But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. -Psalm 92:10

The modern new-age versions (NIV, NASB, ESV, etc) do not say unicorn, but rather they replace the word with "wild ox." It's the King James Bible that specifically mentions unicorns. When the new-age verionists say that a unicorn is an ox, it messes up other descriptive references designed for the term 'unicorn' because the word 'ox' is used in many other places in the Bible. The King James correctly makes a distinction about the unicorn separate from the ox, as we will see.



Though the unicorn has changed more recently into a fantasy aspect due to pagan influence, 200 years ago, the unicorn was more well-known as the rhinoceros. When we look up 'unicorn' in Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary, we find the following:

unicorn: an animal with one horn; the monoceros; this name is often applied to the rhinoceros

(See 'unicorn', Webster's Dictionary, 1828, retrieved July 29, 2011 [http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word,unicorn])

In fact, the rhinoceros is still known as the unicorn in some places in the world today.

(See Eric Dinerstein, *The Return of the Unicorns: The Natural History and Conservation of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros*, Columbia University Press, 2003, ISBN: 9780231084505)

Some rhinoceros have two horns (one large, one tiny), and others have just one, but all have one large primary horn, so the title of "unicorn" (one-horn) still applies to both types of rhinoceros. The Bible uses the term 'unicorn' in describing both one-horn and two-horn types of rhinoceros, as we see from the book of Deuteronomy:

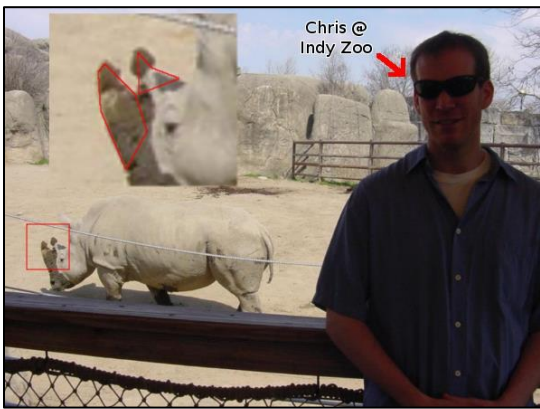


His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. -Deuteronomy 33:17

There are a couple of things that should be noted here:

1. Notice the use of the word "bullock" here, which refers to a young bull. An ox is a bull that has been castrated, so we can see how God's Word is using **two separate metaphors for bull/ox and unicorn**. It separates the demeanor of the bull from the horns of the unicorn, so obviously these are two different creatures.

2. We see Ephraim described as being much bigger than Manasseh, which is like unto "*the horns of unicorns*." A bull's horns are typically even on both sides, but **many rhinoceros have two horns, a smaller one behind the larger**. This specific description would be applied to those unicorns that have a smaller secondary horn directly behind the primary, and the new-age versions, that try to "correct" this reference to an ox, end up making it wrong.



A surprising number of creation websites have claimed a translation error on part of the King James Bible concerning unicorns, but those Christians need to correct their error of faith in their new-age versions.

Again, unicorn was the name given to both one-horned and two-horned rhinoceros, on the basis that they have one large horn on the front of their nose that is clearly recognizable at a distance.

Some scoffers even go so far as to say that 'unicorn' can't apply to the rhinoceros because some have two horns instead of one, but the names of basic kinds of animals don't change based on their variations. For example, narwhals (greek for 'one-horn') are whales that have a single horn coming out of their nose. Sometimes, narwhals are found with two horns instead of one. That doesn't mean the narwhal has to be renamed, but it's simply a variation with a secondary horn. Because a magazine says "narwhal," and it refers to narwhals with a secondary horn, it does not mean the magazine is poorly translated -- just as when the King James Bible says "unicorn," and it may be referring to unicorns that may have a secondary horn, it does not mean the King James Bible is poorly translated.



(See Katie Lambert, "How Narwhals Work," *Discovery How Stuff Works* [animals.howstuffworks.com], retrieved July 30, 2011, [<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/mammals/narwhal4.htm>])

So the King James has 'unicorn' correctly used, but those using new-age versions cannot reconcile the description of Deuteronomy 33:17 without making imaginary excuses for how the description can match an ox. It's one more argument in the large arsenal for the preserved perfection of the King James Bible.

(Read "[Why I Use the King James Bible](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details)