

Chapter 10 | Giving an Undistorted View of God

Ever since Peter Stuyvesant visited the Palace of Versailles the world has had a distorted view of itself.

Peter was the governor of New Amsterdam—later to be renamed New York City—beginning in 1647. He was visiting France to discuss colonial land agreements. While at Versailles he was awed by the Hall of Mirrors.

Peter was determined to bring a similarly amazing showcase to his city. In 1651 he founded the Peter Stuyvesant's House of Mirrors. He charged one Dutch gulden for admission.

This house of mirrors eventually morphed into what we know as a Fun House of Mirrors seen at many carnivals. For a few tickets the fun begins by walking into a maze of mirrors, both convex and concave. We amuse ourselves by looking at distorted images of our figure.

Today you don't even have to go to the carnival for this experience. A laptop with a webcam and a silly photo feature will allow you to take a picture of yourself that you can manipulate to look odd.

It's all fun. But sometimes distorted pictures can cause trouble. It did in Israel during the time of the prophet Samuel. One of the major distortions was found at the Tabernacle, that portable place of praise for God's people.

It was parked at Shiloh and was meant to be a clear picture of God's holiness and grace. A system of sacrifices had been established that foreshadowed the coming sacrifice of the Messiah. Yet anything but holiness was found there.

Eli the priest had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who dishonored God in their treatment of the sacrifices and also engaged in immoral sexual activity with women at the Tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:16, 22). Because the picture of God they were giving was distorted, these two were killed in battle against the Philistines. When news of their death reached Eli, he fell over in his chair, broke his neck, and also died.

Once when my son Kris was three years old we were reading a bedtime Bible story. He asked, "Daddy, what does God look like?" Having no idea how to answer I resorted to a good teaching technique. I threw the question back at him.

"You tell me." He thought for a moment and then said, "He looks like you Daddy." Talk about a sobering moment!

Just like Eli and his sons we are representatives of God. We represent Jesus to others. You may have heard it said that you may be the only Bible those around you will ever 'read.' The question is, "Are you giving a clear or distorted picture of the One True God?"