

were not also in the group that went to the tomb. The statements in Matthew are just as true as those in Luke, but not as complete in these two respects. In certain other matters Matthew is more complete than Luke, since Matthew tells about the earthquake and the terror of the guards, facts not mentioned in Luke.

Taken by itself the account of the reign of Abijah in 1 Kings 14:31-15:7 (here spelled Abijam in most of the Hebrew manuscripts) could lead one to think that this ruler was entirely wicked. Taken by itself the account of the same man in 2 Chronicles 13 could lead one to have the opposite view of his character, particularly in view of the godly character of Asa, the son who followed him as king. Yet both pictures can be entirely true and may well represent his character at different periods of his life. In addition, it might be noted that 2 Chronicles deals principally with the words that he spoke in his efforts to rally his troops, and makes no general judgment on his character. This seeming contradiction should warn us of the danger of drawing inferences that go beyond what is clearly stated in Scripture.

These examples from other parts of the Bible illustrate the necessity of taking care not to assume that a statement is more complete than its writer intended. There are statements in the prophecies of Daniel where too great an assumption of completeness has led interpreters to reach conclusions that contradict the actual facts of history. Thus in Daniel 8:4 the conquests of Cyrus are symbolized by the words: "I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south." A number of commentaries assert that there is here no mention of the east because Cyrus would make few if any conquests in that direction.<sup>6</sup> Yet historical records show that after Cyrus led his armies west to conquer the territory north of Babylonia, then north to conquer Asia Minor, and then south again in order to make a complete conquest of the Babylonian empire, he did not stop his aggressive career but again turned eastward. The territories Cyrus and Darius subdued in the east may have been almost as large as those the Persians conquered in the directions mentioned in Daniel's vision.