

# FREE WILL AND THE BIBLE — A BIBLICAL SCHOLAR'S VIEWS

Dr. Kersey Antia, Aug 11, 2019; updated Sep 29, 2019

Many Christian thinkers have often become disillusioned with the absolute monotheism of the Judeo-Christian tradition. For example, as Bart Ehrman, a former Baptist pastor, explains in his book, *God's Problem* (Harper One, 2008, 304 pages) how trying to unravel the ferocious conundrum of a kind, all-powerful deity who also allows suffering haunted him and undid his faith. As a professor of religion and a best selling author (*Misquoting Jesus*, 2005), he finds his biblical expertise as both a help as well as a hindrance as he examines only explanations of suffering that are found in the Bible such as portrayal as punishment for sin in Genesis et al., as a consequence of others' sins as in the Psalms, as a redemptive act as in the Gospels or as an unknowable part of Providence as in the Book of Job. He finds them all inconsistent and insufficient. However, as David Van Biema comments, those who attempted to explain this riddle "came later (posing it, for instance, as a consequence of the gift of a free will), and Ehrman engages them only slantingly. Were he to confront their ideas in earnest, he would present his disbelief with a stiffer challenge". (*TIME*, February 18, 2008, p. 60). To be succinct, one can easily witness here the shadow of the idea of a Free Will Zoroaster expounded more than a millennium earlier.