

If you know the basic story of the Bible, it doesn't matter if you are reading the names and places of people you can't pronounce. You will understand that through all the places and people and events, the primary purpose of all you read is God calling you to love and obey Him. He loves you. That's a given. But what is yet to be determined is if we will love Him in return. That's where joy and hope occur. And that's the why Bible exists – to increase your affection for God so that you love and trust Him more than anything else in the world.

The story of the Bible is the story of God calling people to follow Him in faith, obedience, and love. And you will either follow the true and living God, or you will follow false gods that are manufactured by Satan, the world, and your own idol-making heart.

If you are reading the first two thirds of the Bible - the Old Testament - you will be reading about God trying to persuade a group of people who belong to ethnic Israel to follow Him. And in the last one third of the Bible - the New Testament - you will read where God establishes His church, and through the church, He invites people from all over the world to follow Him.

The key person that links both parts of the Bible together is Jesus Christ the Son of God. God raised up ethnic Israel in order to bring Jesus Christ into the world to be a Savior from sin for all the world.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus left heaven and became a human. At age 30 He began to announce and demonstrate to the world that He was the Messiah-the man whom God sent from heaven to save the world from sin.

Jesus saved the world by offering His body into the hands of His enemies who crucified Him. They hated His claim that they needed a Savior. They hated His claim that He was the Savior. And God

used their hatred to crucify His Son. But it was the plan of God, that as Jesus suffered and died, His body would be a sacrifice to provide cleansing from sin for anyone who trusted in Him. Jesus demonstrated that His claims were trustworthy because He rose from the dead, something that no man has ever done. So that's the purpose of everything God did in the Bible - to prepare the world for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

There are many great stories in the Bible of courage and love and justice. And it is good to read those stories and desire to be more courageous, more loving, and more just. But there is not enough willingness in our hearts individually, and as a world, to believe that we as humans will ever transform this world into a good place by being courageous, loving and just. We simply won't do it.

So the purpose of the Bible is to point us to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the one and only man who was perfectly courageous, perfectly loving, and perfectly just. He sacrificed His life on a cross and rose from the dead so that He might forgive a group of people that He is calling from this world to follow Him, represent Him, and wait for Him to bring about a new earth that is perfect in every way.

His plan for us is that while we live on this earth and wait for the new earth, we will live in a way that most honors Him, allow us to most enjoy Him, and help others experience Him in the greatest possible way.