

## The Real Muhammad: In the Eyes of Ibn Ishaq

John C. Rankin



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[From the back cover] Can Muhammad satisfy the Muslim thirst for freedom? I believe all people are hardwired by the one true Creator for full religious, political and economic liberty. Muhammad is the prophet of Islam, and his way of life, or Sunna, determines every detail of a Muslim's life. He is the measure of the Islamic understanding of the social order and politics. But how well do Muslims, or any of us, know the real Muhammad? In these pages, we will look at: 1. A summary of Ibn Ishaq's biography, or Sira, of Muhammad's life, person and character. Ibn Ishaq's Sira is the most ancient, extant and authoritative source we have for Muhammad's life; 2. How Ibn Ishaq's narrative represents Muhammad as fulfilling and transcending the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament; and 3. A reference to appropriate biblical texts in the footnotes. The crux of the issue is this: Islam is historically a one-way religion. It is rooted in Muhammad's person as the prophet of Allah, bringing forth the Qur'an. Whether a person is born into, chooses to enter, or is driven into Islam, he or she is prohibited from leaving it. Muhammad builds and enforces this assumption over the course of his life. His right hand man, and the first caliph after Muhammad's death, Abu Bakr, puts it this way: "Allah sent Muhammad with his religion and he strove for it until men accepted it voluntarily or by force." The Arabic word used here for "strove" is from the root word jihad. Is this what any or all Muslims embrace today? Is this what any person in any religion wants to embrace?

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