## The Binding of Isaac:

## An Extreme Narrative with the Keys to a Non-Extremist Religious Life

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<sup>1</sup>Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup>And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." <sup>3</sup>So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. <sup>5</sup>Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."

<sup>6</sup>Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. <sup>7</sup>Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup>They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup>And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup>Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup>And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me." <sup>13</sup>When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. <sup>14</sup>And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of the LORD there is vision."

<sup>15</sup>The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, "By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, <sup>17</sup>I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. <sup>18</sup>All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command." <sup>19</sup>Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

(א) ויהי אחר הדברים האלה והא-לקים נסה את־אברהם ויאמר אליו אברהם ויאמר הנני: (ב) ויאמר קַחַינָא אֶת־בָּנָדָ אֶת־יַחִידָדָ אַשֶּׁר־אַהַבַּתַּ אֶת־יַצָחַק וְלַדְּ־לַדְּ אֱל־אַרַץ הַפֹּרַיַּה וְהַעַלָהוּ שֶׁם לְעַלָה עַל אֲחַד ָהֶהָרִים אֲשֵׁר אֹמֵר אֵלֶיךּ : (ג) וַיַּשִׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֵר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֵת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַח אֵת־שָׁנֵי נְעָרִיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בָּנוֹ וַיָבַקָּע עֲצֵי עֹלָה וַיַּקָם וַיֶּלֶךְ אֱל־הַמַּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַמַר־לוֹ הָאֵ-לֹקִים: (ד) בַּיּוֹם הַשִּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשֵּׂא אַבְרַהַם אָת־עִינִיו וַיַּרָא אָת־הַמַּקוֹם מֶרָחֹק : (ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אָבַרְהַם אָל־נערָיו שבו־לַכֶּם פֹּה עם־הַחַמוֹר וַאָנִי וְהַנַּעַר ַגַלְכָה עַד־כֹּה וְנָשִׁתַּחֵוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם : (ו) וַיִּקַח אַבְרָהָם אֵת־עַצֵי הָעלָה וַיָּשֵם עַל־יִצְחָק בִּנוֹ וַיְּקַח בִּיָדוֹ ָאָת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכֶלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שָׁנִיהֶם יַחָדַוּ: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֱל־אַבַרָהַם אַבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אַבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הָנַנִּי בָנִי וַיֹּאמֵר הַנֵּה הַאֵשׁ וְהַעֲצִים וְאַיֵּה הַשֵּׁה לְעלָה: (ח) וַיֹּאמֵר אַבְרָהָם אֱ-לֹקִים יִרְאֵה־לּוֹ הַשְּׂה לְעלָה בְּנִי וַיַּלָכוּ שׁנִיהֶם יַחַדַּוֹ: (ט) וַיָּבאוּ אַל־הַמַּקוֹם אַשׁר אַמֶּר־לוֹ הַאַ-לֹקִים וַיְּבֶן שַׁם אַבְרָהַם אַת־הַמּוֹבֶּח וַיַּעֵרדְּ ָאֶת־הַעֶצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחַק בָּנוֹ וַיַּשֶּׁם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמְּוָבֶּחַ מְמַעַל לַעֲצִים : (י) וַיִּשָׁלַח אַבְרַהַם אֶת־יַדוֹ וַיִּקַח ּ אֶת־הַמַּאֱכֶלֶת לָשָׁחֹט אֱת־בָּנוֹ : (יא) וַיִּקָרָא אֱלַיו מַלְאַדְּ ה׳ מָן־הַשַּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָהָם אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הָנַּנִי (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־תִּשִׁלַח יָדְדְּ אֱל־הַנַּעַר וְאַל־תַּעַשׁ לוֹ מָאוּמֶה כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעִתִּי כִּי־יָרֵא אֱ-לֹקִים אַתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׂכְתָּ את־בנד את־יחידד ממני: (יג) וישא אברהם את־עיניו וירא והנה־איל אחר נאחז בסבד בקרניו וילד אַבְרָהַם וַיִּקָּח אֶת־הַאַיִל וַיַּעַלֶהוּ לָעלָה תַּחַת בְּנוֹ: (יד) וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהַם שֶׁם־הַמַּקוֹם הַהוּא הי יָרָאָה אֲשֶׁר ַנָאַמֶר הַיּוֹם בָּהַר הי יַרָאָה : (טוֹ) וַיִּקְרָא מַלָאַדְּ הי אַלֹאבְרָהָם שַׁנִית מוְ־הַשַּׁמֵיִם : (טוֹ) וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נַשַּׁבַעְתִּי ָנָאָם־הי כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עַשִּׁיתַ אֶת־הַדָּבַר הַזֶּה וָלֹא חַשְּׁכִתַּ אֶת־בִּנָדְ אֶת־יַחִידֵּךְ: (יז) כִּיבַרְדְּ אֶבַרְכָּדְ וְהַרְבַּה אַרבּה אַת־זַרעַדְּ כָּכוֹכָבֵי הַשַּׁמִים וְכַחוֹל אַשֶּׁר עַל־שָּׁפַת הַיַּם וְיַרְשׁ זַרְעַדְ אָת שַׁעַר אֹיָבִיו: (יח) וְהָתָבּּרְכוּ ָבְזַרְעַךְ כֹּל גּוֹנֵי הָאָרֵץ עֶקֶב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעָתַּ בִּקֹלִי: (יט) וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם אֵלֹּנְעָרַיו וַיַּקָמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֵלֹבְּאֵר יַשַבע וַיָּשֵׁב אַבְרָהַם בִּבָאֵר שַׁבַע:

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