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The Artless Jew and the Iconophobic Christian: An Artistic Approach to the 'Parting of the Ways'

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Oral Presentation O6.3

**THE ARTLESS JEW AND THE ICONOPHOBIC CHRISTIAN:
AN ARTISTIC APPROACH TO THE 'PARTING OF THE WAYS'**

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After the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 70 CE only two major divisions of Second Temple Judaism survived: one that would eventually become Rabbinic Judaism and one that would transform into a completely separate religion, Christianity. Without a doubt these two religions grew out of one, but when and how this happened is a topic of hot debate among scholars today. These scholars often use the biased accounts of first century historians, as well as the New Testament scriptures, in an attempt to answer these questions, but they're only looking at *words*. Through an examination of the catacombs and the buildings found at Dura-Europos, the earliest examples of 'Jewish' and 'Christian' art, I believe the answers to the questions of when and how the Ways finally parted can be best found by looking instead at *pictures*. In particular, how one motif is interpreted by both Christian and Jewish artists within their most private spaces of worship: Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.