God is one. Understanding monotheism.

The second principle of our faith is that God is One. Last week we explained that monotheism, is not just an arithmetic reduction of the numbers of gods. It is, above all, a moral declaration. If only one God exist, then there is only one clear and exclusive set of moral values. The existence of numerous gods, on the other hand, justifies, or requires, moral relativism (see here).

Monotheism also protected the Jewish people against extinction.

In ancient times, assimilation did not mean social intermarriage. Civilizations clashed with each other, conquered and submitted to each other. When civilization A conquered civilization B, A would force B to accept A's gods. Still, it was not necessary for B to get rid completely of their own gods. From now on B, would adopt and worship the gods of A alongside its own gods.

When two civilizations would somehow, live in peace with each other, one would graciously add the gods of the other to its own sanctuary. It was actually considered an act of politeness accepting and worshiping other gods. It showed that you were open minded and sophisticated. Needless to say, the constant wars and even alliances between civilizations were fatal for the original identity of those civilizations. Once A and B became AB, it was just a matter of time until they will also adopt C or D's gods. Thus, the original identity, culture and values of A or B completely disappeared. That is how all ancient civilizations: A, B, C, D, etc. diluted from the face of the earth….

This phenomenon is known as 'syncretism', and it prevailed among ALL peoples of antiquity **except for the Jews**. Only the God of Israel demanded 'exclusivity': YOU SHALL NOT HAVE OTHER GODS, OTHER THAN ME…says the second of the Ten commandments.

(*to be continued….*)