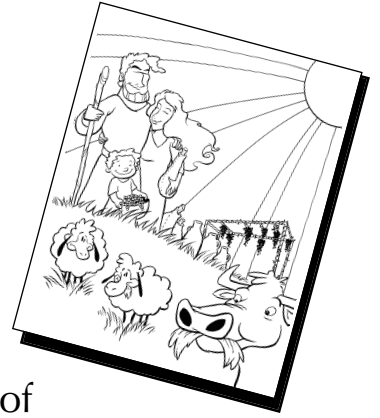




God Promises to Bless or Curse

Deuteronomy 11; 28



LESSON GOAL

Students will see the promised results of obedience and disobedience.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God promised to bless Israel as long as they were obedient.
- God had blessed Israel for their obedience in the past.
- God promised to curse Israel if they were disobedient.
- There are consequences for sin and disobedience today, too.

KEY VERSE

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God...and the curse, if you do not obey” (Deuteronomy 11:26–28a).

APPLICATION

- Obey God to demonstrate your love for Him.
- Remember God’s blessings for past obedience.
- Memorize God’s Word so you will do what is right.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

In today’s lesson, Moses once again was reminding Israel of their duty before God. They were to love God and keep His commands (Deut. 11:1). He explained to Israel what God required of them and told them that that the result of obedience would be a long and prosperous life in the Promised Land. Moses reminded Israel of the great wonders that God had done for them when they were obedient in the past. He also warned them of the great danger of disobeying God’s instruction by recalling the destruction of the rebellious families who were swallowed by the earth. The people of Israel had witnessed God’s faithfulness and justice firsthand. And because of the warning that they had received, they had no excuse when they finally were removed from the land for their disobedience (Deut. 4:25–31). (The removal of the northern kingdom occurred in 722 B.C. by Assyria, and Judah was removed in 586 B.C. by Babylon.)

Moses instructed the people, “Keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land...that you may prolong your days” (Deut. 11:8–9a). Later in the chapter, he went on to say, “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey...and the curse, if you do not obey” (11:26–28). Moses made it very clear that there was a cause-and-effect relationship between obedience and blessing and disobedience and cursing. The Israelites were on the verge of crossing into the Promised Land to possess it. Their commitment to God’s law would have a direct effect on the continued blessing on the land. Israel’s true love for God was evidenced through their obedience to His Word. In the New Testament, Jesus repeated this principle when He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

What made Moses’ call of commitment to God so unique was the stark contrast to the worship practiced by the surrounding nations. According to the religion of Canaan, the god Baal was responsible for the fertility of the land. The Canaanites believed that Baal was directly linked to the rain and the success of the crops each year. Without rain in its season, the land would not be productive, and the people would not have the food that they needed to live. The Canaanites would sacrifice to Baal in an attempt to appease him and get him to send rain. Their actions were not driven by their love for Baal but by their belief that they could make Baal do what they wanted.

Moses warned the Israelites not to “turn aside from the way I commanded you today to go after other gods which you have not known” (Deut. 11:28). Remember that at this time, the Canaanites still inhabited the land. Because the Israelites failed to remove the Canaanites completely from the land, they were enticed to worship Canaan’s gods and not the one true God. Their commitment to God could not be partial or wavering. They needed to be completely dedicated to Him. They did not have the option of worshiping God along with something else. God is a

Additional Reference Materials

The Message of Deuteronomy by Raymond Brown

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

The New American Commentary by Eugene H. Merrill

jealous God. He said, "I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images" (Isa. 42:8; 48:11).

In this passage, Moses gave Israel two motivations for loving and obeying God. The first motivation was the mercy that God had shown to them throughout their history. God had demonstrated His mercy by rescuing them from Egypt and then continually sustaining and guiding them through their wanderings in the wilderness. The second motivation for Israel's obedience was the fact that God had protected them in the past and would continue to do so in the future. God's promise of a future blessing in the land for Israel was dependent on Israel's constant obedience to God's commands (Deut. 11:13–17).

Israel was also told what would happen if they disobeyed the Lord's commands. In Deuteronomy 28, Moses had finished preparing the people to enter the Promised Land. The focus was no longer on the future possibilities of Israel, but rather on their covenant renewal just before they entered the land. Deuteronomy 29:1 is a summary of the chapter. It says, "These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel." Israel was renewing the covenant that they had made when they came out of Egypt. God had promised to give this land to Israel, but there were conditions that must be met in order to enjoy the blessings of the land in the future. The people had publicly committed to obey God's standards for their lives. They had been given the responsibility to remain loyal to the Lord. God had miraculously brought them from Egypt, provided food and water, and had given them everything that they could ever need.

In Deuteronomy 28, we can see the blessings and curses promised as a result of obedience and disobedience. These blessings and curses were written in couplets, which helped Israel to memorize them. This also showed the importance of the choice between blessings and curses (blessed/cursed shall be the fruit of your body, blessed/cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl, etc.—Deut. 28:4, 5, 17, 18). Israel was given the opportunity to make a conscious decision to choose curses or blessings.

This long list of curses, which encompasses about three-fourths of the passage, is designed as a stern reminder to not fall into sin, lest these things happen. Verse 20 encompasses much of the essence of the following curses (Deut. 28:15–68): "The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me" (28:20).

In the following verses, the extent of the cursing that Israel would encounter if they were disloyal to God becomes clear. The first section of curses is an opposite reflection of the blessings given in the first half of the chapter. The curses made it very clear that the devastation would be painful and would encompass every aspect of life. The curses would continue, and there would not be relief until the Lord destroyed Israel (Deut. 28:20). The images painted in these verses are gruesome and likely would provide a great incentive to avoid these consequences at all costs. These verses speak of disease, infertility, various sicknesses, scorching sun, lack of water, defeat by enemies, madness, sickness, destitution, weakness, pestilence, loss of family members, deportation, and more. This last curse, deportation into slavery in Egypt, would create a full circle for Israel when it took place. Though they could have lived freely with the blessings of a land flowing with milk and honey, they would rather choose rebellion to God and return to bondage.

It is ironic that people would choose to embrace a false god whom they could control rather than submit to the sovereignty of the one true God. Moses warned Israel of the dangers of rebelling against God. He warned them that curses and judgment would come on them if they disobeyed God and worshiped other gods.

God is gracious and kind and desires to bless His people. But He also is just and punishes sin. The God who punished the Israelites for their sin is the same God who punishes believers today when they rebel. The principles behind these verses still are true. God hates and punishes sin and blesses obedience.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

What did we learn about God from Deuteronomy 6:4?

We learned that the Lord is one God.

What was the Israelites' first responsibility?

Their first responsibility was to love the Lord.

How were the Israelites to love the Lord?

They were to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength. The Israelites were to reveal their love for the Lord by how they obeyed.

What was their second responsibility?

Their second responsibility was to teach God's Word to their children.

Why was it so important for the Israelites to know the Word of God?

So they would not forget the Lord.

How should we love God?

We should love God with a sincere and complete love. Nothing compares to God, and nothing should come between you and God.



The Silent Game

Set the students in small groups at tables. Give them PlayDoh, but tell them they can play with it only if they are quiet. If are not quiet, then you will take it away. Monitor when you should give and take away the PlayDoh. After play time, talk about what happened and how it relates to today's lesson on God's promises, Israel's choice to obey or disobey, and God's blessings and curses on Israel.



What Is Disobedience?

Before beginning the lesson, ask the students to tell you what disobedience is. Answers may include: lying, cheating, stealing, etc. Disobedience is sin. It is doing something that you were told not to do or not doing something that you were told to do. Explain that God told Israel to obey His instructions. But they chose to do what they wanted and disobeyed God.



Love God and Keep His Commandments

This game is a variation of “Mother may I?” Instead of saying, “Mother may I?” when a command is given, have the student say, “Love God and keep His commandments.” Pull a command out of a bag and read it. If the student remembers to say, “Love God and keep His commandments,” he gets to move as the command says. If he forgets, he must go back to the starting line. When students obey the commands, they move one step closer to the Promised Land.

Ideas for commands: Take one giant jump over Jordan’s bank or two small jumps over Moab’s rocks; spin or turn like the wind; take 10 little steps, a fast step, or Joshua’s giant step; donkey trot two steps; move a camel’s length or a fuzzy lamb’s length; run four steps toward Jericho; etc. The first student across the line arrives in the Promised Land.



Blessings and Cursings

In Deuteronomy, we hear a lot about blessing and cursing. What are these blessings and curses, and what do they do? In the Old Testament, a blessing or a curse could be a way of saying that a good or bad thing would happen to someone else. When God was happy with someone for something he did, God would give a blessing. It was a gift. It was something that made the people getting the blessing very happy. For example, rain could be a blessing because it makes plants grow and provides water to drink and food to eat. On the other hand, if someone was disobedient, God would give a curse to him; this was the opposite of a blessing. A curse might be no water, sick family members, or sick animals. This was something that would make the person getting the curse very sad. Are curses something that we see today? No; we no longer are blessed as Israel was for doing good or cursed for doing bad. We do have consequences for doing wrong things, and sometimes we get rewarded for doing the right thing, but not in the same way that Israel was cursed and blessed. Our reward will be blessings in heaven with God. For those who do not accept Jesus as their Savior, their curse will be punishment in hell forever.



Blessed for Obedience

How do you know when your parents are happy with you? Often they will tell you that you have done well. Sometimes they will give you a reward when you have been obedient. In today’s lesson, Moses reminded the people of Israel that God would bless them if they were obedient to His commands. If they followed God’s Word, they would be blessed in the land that they were about to enter.



What Is Faithfulness?

Discuss with the class what being faithful means. If someone is faithful, it means that he is reliable and that you can trust him. If people say they will do something and they always do it, they are faithful. Would God be faithful to Israel no matter what Israel did? Yes; God is perfect, and He never can be unfaithful. Could Israel fail and be unfaithful? Yes, because the nation was made up of sinful men, women, and children.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Today, we are going to learn more about why the Israelites were to love and obey God. Moses reminded the Israelites about the many wonderful things that God had done in for them in Egypt and in the desert. Do you remember some of the wonderful things that God did? God sent plagues on Egypt so that the pharaoh (the king of the Egyptians) would free the Israelites from slavery. After Israel was freed, Pharaoh changed his mind and tried to catch Israel and make them slaves again. God protected Israel and opened the waters of the Red Sea so that they could travel through on dry ground. Then God destroyed the Egyptian army, which was trying to capture Israel and take them back to Egypt. While Israel traveled through the desert for 40 years, God provided water and food for them. There were many other things that God did to bless Israel, too. God is very wonderful and good! The first reason that Moses told the Israelites to choose to love and obey God was that God had done so many wonderful things for them.

The second reason for the Israelites to choose to love and obey God was that God would bless them in the future, when they entered the Promised Land, if they obeyed Him. God had promised to give the Israelites a land of their own, and they finally were about to enter it. Moses told the Israelites that if they faithfully loved and obeyed God, then God would continue to do the wonderful things for them in the Promised Land that He had done for them in Egypt and in the desert.

God promised many blessings for the Israelites if they would obey all the things that He commanded. He would bless them by giving them victory over their enemies, protecting them, and taking care of their animals and crops so that they would have plenty of food.

But did the Israelites do everything that they were supposed to do by loving and obeying God? No! What would happen to the Israelites if they were not faithful to the covenant and chose to not love and obey God? Moses warned them about this. He said that the Lord would send curses on everything they did until they were destroyed because they did not obey the Lord. Do you know what a curse is? A curse is a punishment where things go wrong. If the Israelites did not obey God, they would have disease and have no water to drink or food to eat. They will be defeated by their enemies, would lose the Promised Land, and have many other bad things happen. They also would lose their spiritual closeness with God. God is the one who gives us every good thing, but because He is just, He also punishes people who sin.

We can make the choice to obey and love God today, too. If we choose to love and obey Him, He may not give us extra toys or good food, but He will bless us with spiritual blessings. God will bless spiritually those who are obedient to Him. But those who choose to reject Him will be punished forever in hell.



Lesson Questions

Why did Moses tell the people of Israel that they should be obedient to God? *First, Moses reminded the people of the past. God had been faithful to bless Israel if they were obedient to Him as they went through the wilderness. The second reason for obedience was that Israel would be blessed in the Promised Land if they continued to be obedient to God.*

What kind of blessing would the people experience if they were obedient? *If the people were obedient, they would have fruitful farms, plenty of food to eat, victory over their enemies, and the blessing of children. Things would go well with them if they obeyed God's Word.*

Why do we obey God today? *If you are one of God's children, He expects your obedience. We show God our love by listening to His Word and obeying it. Through obedience, we are able to be spiritually blessed in our relationship with Him.*

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Following Directions

Bring in a simple object to assemble. Follow the directions. Explain to the students that God also has plans for our lives. In order for our lives to be pleasing to God we must obey His directions, found in the Bible.



Blessings and Curses

To illustrate the blessings and curses on the land, bring in two plants. The first will be illustrated in this week's lesson and should be a very healthy plant that has been watered and taken care of. The second plant will be brought in next week. This plant will be dead because of lack of water. Talk about why rain was so important for the land and the children of Israel.

Praise and Worship

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

I Love You, Lord

Seek Ye First

The Wise Man and Foolish Man

Thy Word

Trust and Obey

I Will Sing of the Mercies

In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified



Always Remember to Obey God

Tie a bow around your finger
(Pretend to tie bow in midair; then hold up index finger.)

To be sure you will remember
(Point to temple.)

To love and obey all God's ways,
(Hug self; then point up.)

And then He will bless your days.
(Hold hands overhead and wiggle fingers while slowly lowering hands)

Yes, it will go well with you;
(Nod; point outward.)

God's promises are always true.
(Continue nodding while holding hand over heart.)



A Choice to Make

Israel had a choice to make;
(Rub chin with thumb and index finger.)

They knew what God had said.
(Point to temple; then point up.)

If they chose obedience,
(Place palms together and nod.)

Then they would be the head.
(Point to the top of your head.)

If they chose to disobey,
(Look up and shake fist at ceiling.)

God's test they then would fail,
(Hide face in hands.)

Cursed by God, His chosen ones
(Point up and shake head back and forth.)

Instead would be the tail.
(Place hand behind back and wiggle fingers.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Blessings and Cursings Card

Materials: 8.5x11-inch white cardstock, copies of the two “Blessings and Cursings” craft pages, 3x5-inch pieces of green and brown construction paper, stickers or other decorations, glue, scissors, crayons

Directions: Fold both ends of a piece of cardstock into the center to fold a tri-fold card. On the left-hand cover, glue the heart and Bible verse from the first “Blessings and Cursings” craft page. Color the heart red. On the left-hand inside of the card, glue a pop-up of green hills and the additional information about blessings. (To make the hills: Fold a piece of green construction paper in half, and then fold each end to the center for make an accordion. Cut one edge to make hills.) Decorate the inside center of the card with people, cows, fruits and vegetables, and rain and rainbows to represent God's blessings. On the right-hand cover of the card, glue the heart and Bible verse from the second craft page. Color the heart black. On the right-hand inside of the card, glue a pop-up of brown hills and the additional information about curses.



A Handy Reminder

Materials: construction paper, crayons or markers, yarn, hole punchers

Directions: Have the students trace their hands onto construction paper. Punch holes on each side of the index finger and thread one piece of yarn through the holes; tie a bow on the front side of the paper. Have students color their hand tracings.



Cause and Effect

There are a variety of games to play to demonstrate the principle of cause and effect, an important element of today's story. (When Israel obeys, they get God's promised blessings; when they disobey, they get curses.)

Ball Rolling: Decide what will cause an item to roll to the finish line: kicking a ball with foot; bumping it with hand, head, or elbow; or blowing on a balloon.

Bag of Cards: In a bag, put several green cards and red cards cut from construction paper. The students will start at a line and move toward the finish line. Each student draws a card. When the card is green, he goes two steps forward. When the card is red, he goes one step back.



Blessings and Curses Foldout

Materials: copies of the “Blessings and Cursings Foldout” craft sheets, scissors, glue, crayons

Procedure: Cut out the mountain scene along the dark line, forming a rectangle. Fold the paper in half, from left to right. Fold each side in half so that all folds are parallel. The page should now be divided into four sections of the same length across the page of paper. Have students color and decorate the mountains. Decorate the right side with the blessings God promised Israel. Decorate the left side with curses God promised Israel. Fold each end of the card in toward the middle so that the card opens to the middle. On the outside of the card, glue the verse, Deuteronomy 11:26, to one side of the fold.



How Has God Blessed You?

What are things that you are thankful for here on earth and in heaven?

On earth—loving family, food to eat, house in which to live, a pet, a church to go to, good friends, etc.

In heaven—a place prepared to be in God’s presence, to be able to worship Him, no sadness, to be with other family members who are believers, etc.



“Blessings of Obedience”

Materials: copies of the “Blessings of Obedience” coloring page, crayons, stickers or other decorations

Directions: The B represents the blessings God promised Israel if they were obedient to His commands. Have the students color the letter green, and then have them decorate the letter further with elements representing the blessings, such as people, cows, fruits and vegetables, rain and rainbows, etc.



“Curses of Disobedience”

Materials: copies of “Curses of Disobedience” page, crayons, twigs, glue

Directions: Have students color the C brown. They also can decorate the letter by gluing on twigs. This letter represents the curses God promised Israel if they disobeyed.

Coloring Sheets

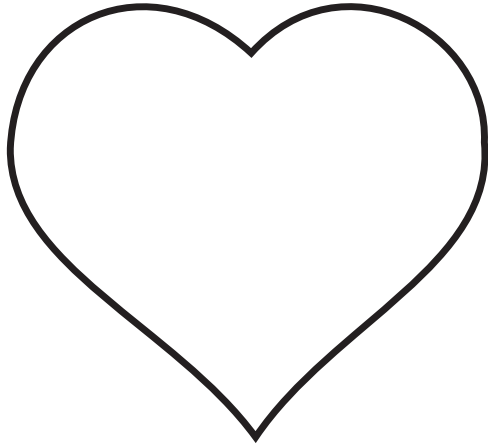
Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God...and the curse, if you do not obey” (Deuteronomy 11:26–28a).

Blessings and Cursings



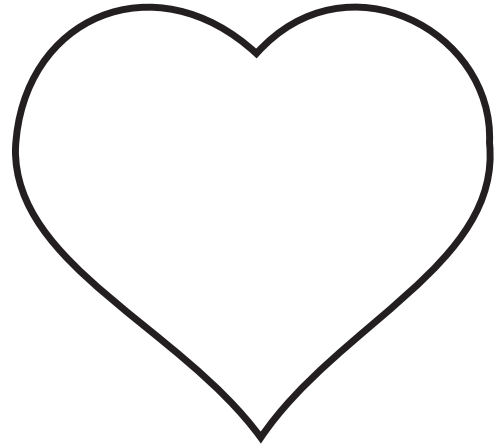
“The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today...”
(Deuteronomy 11:27).

God’s Blessings for Israel in the Promised Land (Deut. 11:8–25)

- Strength
- Prolonged days in the Promised Land
- Land flowing with milk and honey
- Rain for the land and crops
- Grass in the fields for cattle
- Plenty of food
- God would drive other nations from the land
- Other people would fear them

Blessings and Cursings

“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me” (Deuteronomy 28:20).



God Curses Israel When They Turn away from Him (Deut. 28:15–68)

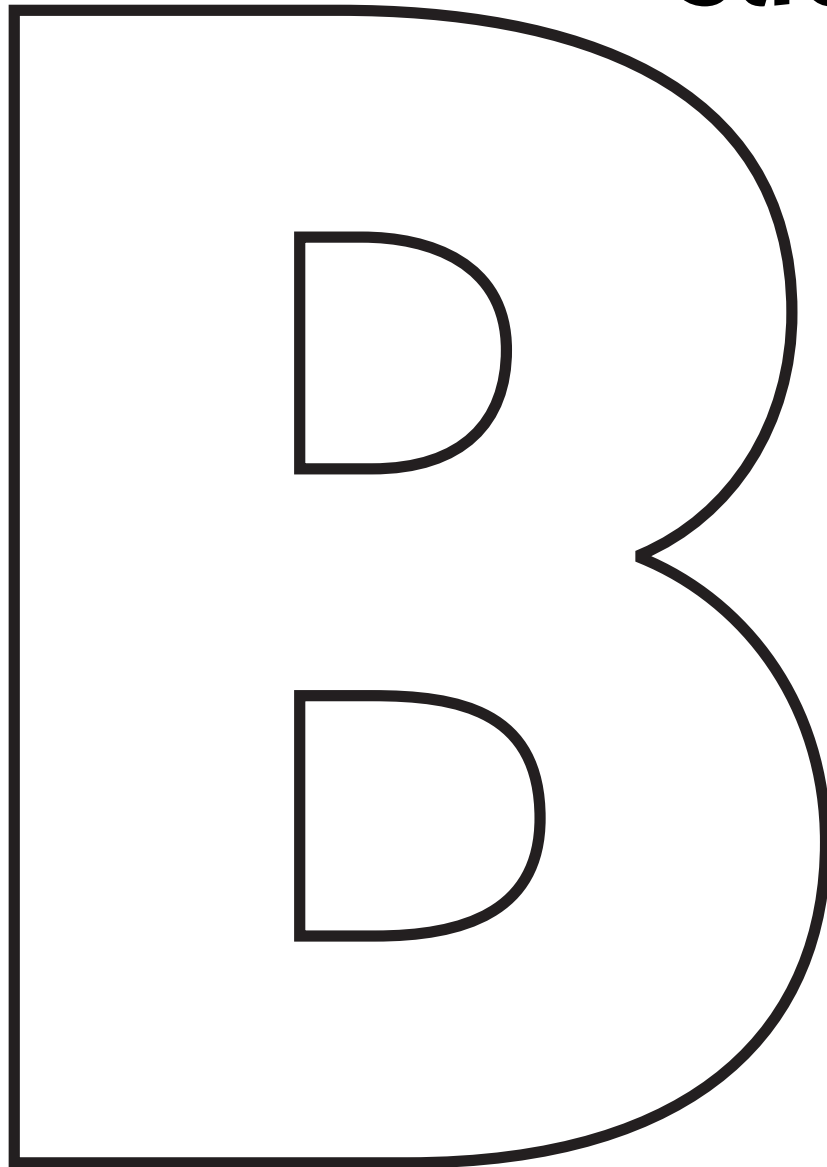
- God’s anger would be kindled against them.
- There would be no rain to water their crops, and food would not grow from the land.
- They would be defeated by their enemies.
- They would be cursed in every aspect of their lives until they perished from the land.

Blessings of Obedience

In Deuteronomy 11, God promised Israel that if they obeyed Him, He would bless them with...

Rain from Heaven

Strength



Hills and Valleys

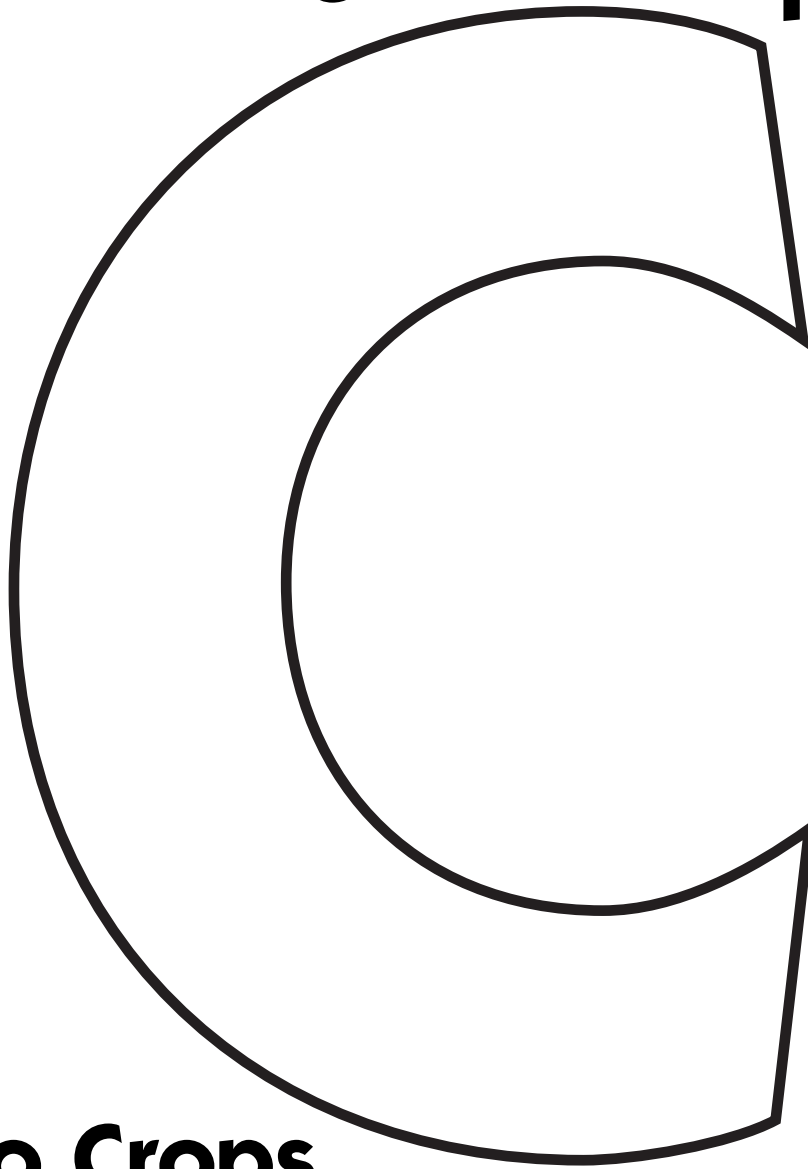
God's Care

Curses of Disobedience

In Deuteronomy 28, God promised Israel that if they disobeyed Him, He would curse them with...

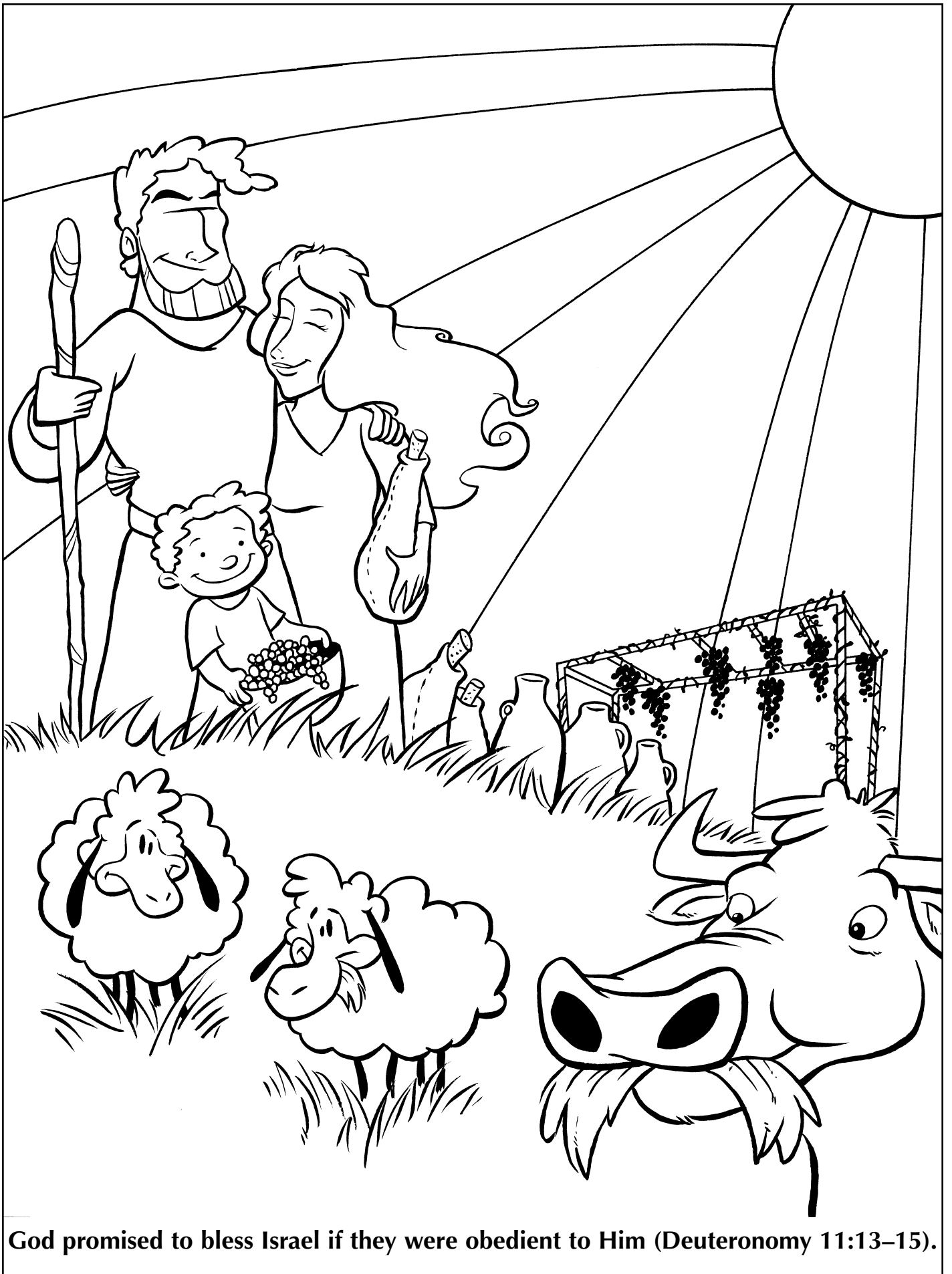
God's Anger

No Rain

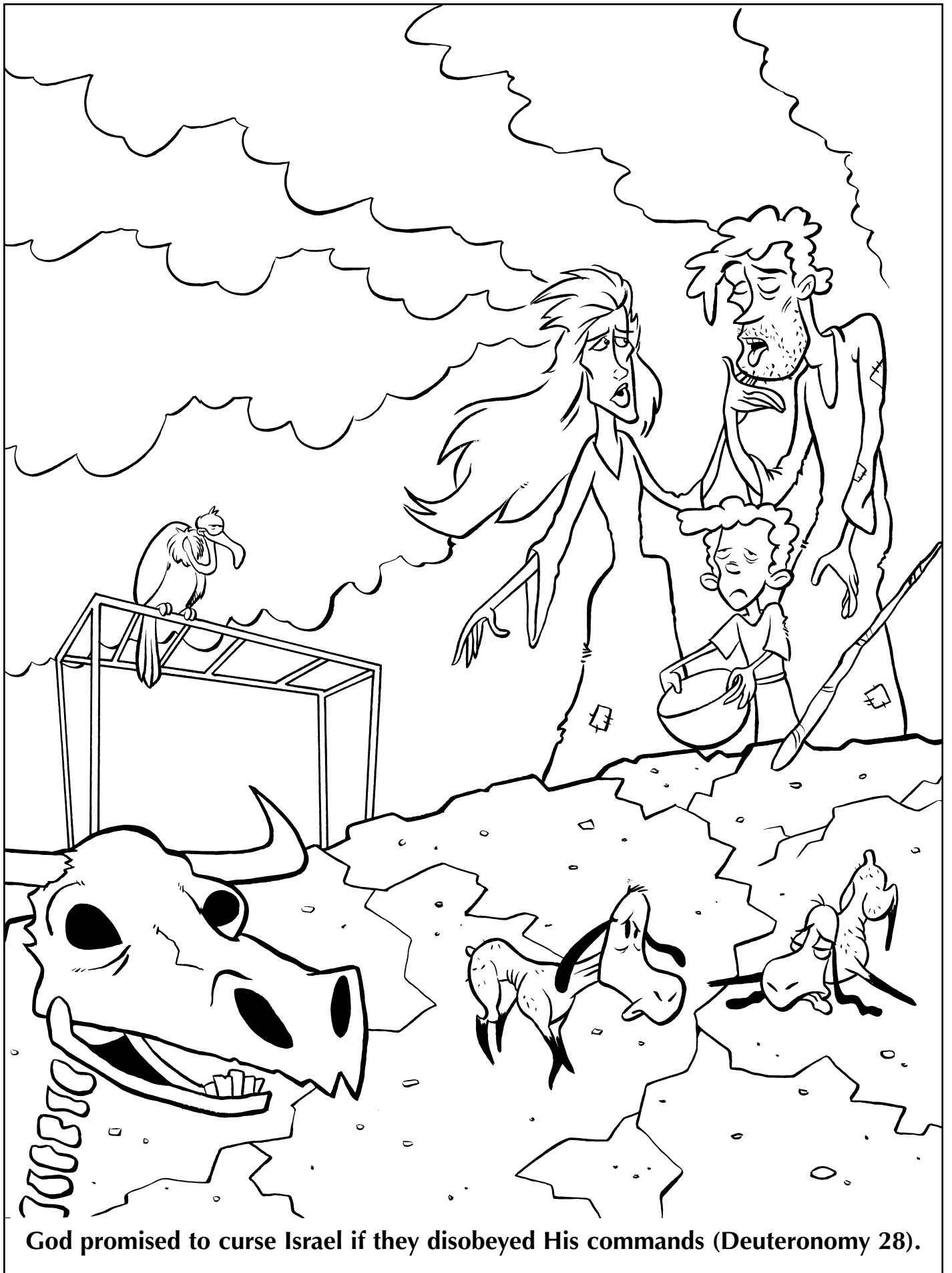


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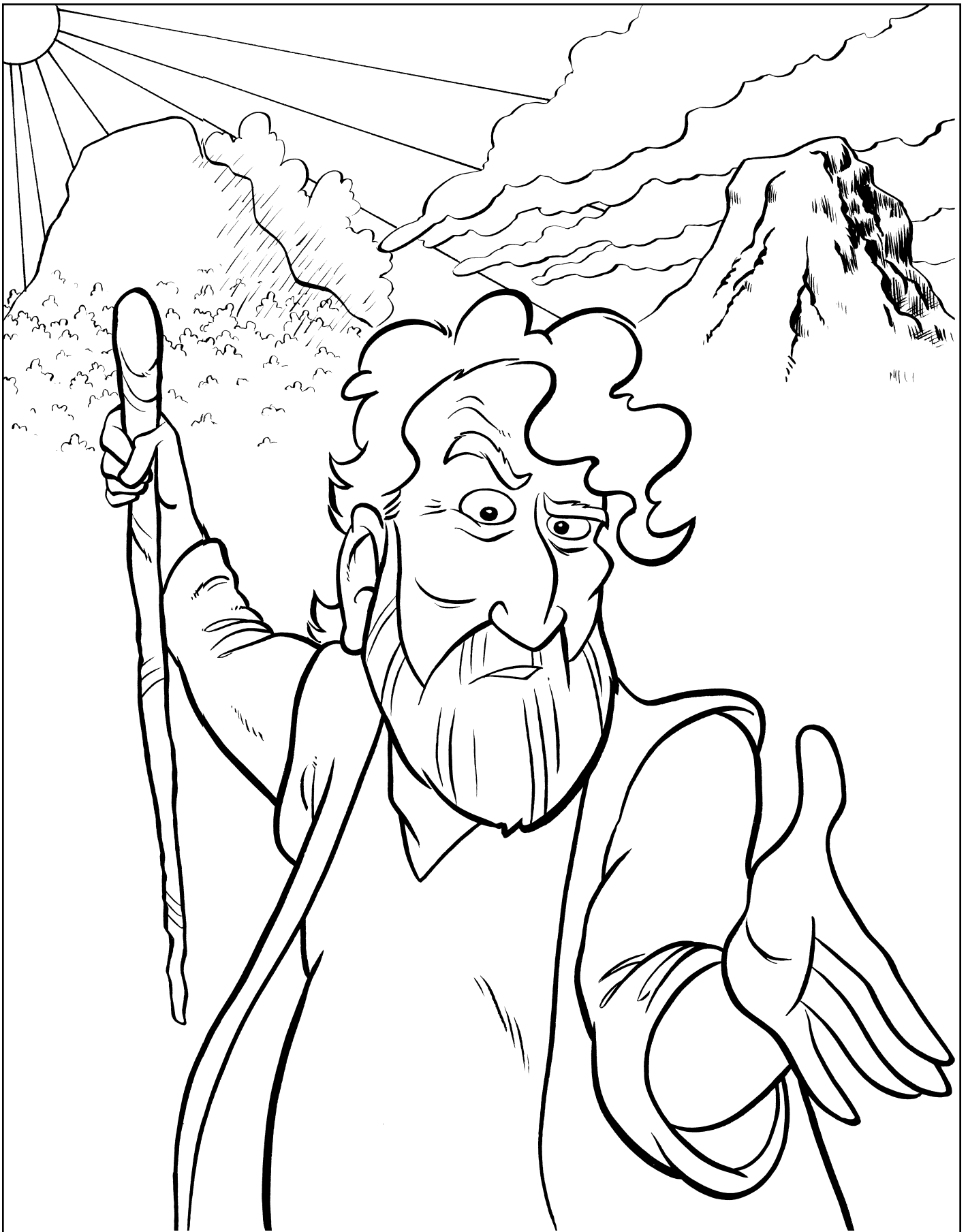
Defeat



God promised to bless Israel if they were obedient to Him (Deuteronomy 11:13-15).



God promised to curse Israel if they disobeyed His commands (Deuteronomy 28).



“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse” (Deuteronomy 11:26).



**“Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the LORD”
(Colossians 3:20).**

