I. Gold by Leon Trabaco

They say that in the early 1930s, Mexican Leon Trabuco hid a lot of gold in the desert of New Mexico. At that time, the USA was going through a period of great depression. The value of the dollar was falling, while the value of gold increased several times. Trabuco and his partners bought 16 tons of gold, smuggled it to the United States and hid it in the New Mexico desert to sell when prices rose.

It became apparent that they seriously miscalculated when the “Gold Act” was introduced, which prohibited private ownership of gold. Trabuco and company, therefore, found themselves in an unenviable position with their gold. Three of Trabuco's five partners died within five years, and when Trabuco himself died, the location of the gold died with him. Many have tried to find Trabuco gold, but in vain.

Today, our Sabbath is dedicated to a particularly relevant topic. We are thinking about how to feed the hungry during a natural disaster. We don’t have a ton of gold, but we do have a Bible. The Bible is not a treasure trove of literal gold, it is a treasure trove of unique principles—precious rules that are tips on how to act in various circumstances of life. A person’s success in life depends on understanding and observing these laws. If we wanted to find golden treasures, we would face a lot of dangers on that road, even to the point of losing our lives. But biblical principles are available to us if we carefully study the Bible.

II. Aid to the starving in natural disasters

A. The Bible on the problem of helping the starving in natural disasters

1. Is there a principle in the Bible that would help us in organizing aid for the starving? In *Genesis 41:55* we find the text: “So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, ‘Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.’ ”

2. What situation is described in this text? The result of a natural disaster is described here: famine in Egypt. The people began to starve. In desperation, people began to seek help from the state. Egypt, the most civilized country in the world, was unprepared for such a state.
3. How did Pharaoh act when the people turned to him? “... Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, ‘Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do’ ” (Genesis 41:55).

4. Who is Joseph?
   a) He was a slave-prisoner. “Then Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison” (Genesis 39:20).
   b) The pharaoh appointed Joseph to be the manager of his house. “You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.’ Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, ‘Bow the knee!’ So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, ‘I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt’ ” (Genesis 41:40-44).

5. Did Joseph manage to feed the people of Egypt? Yes, Joseph managed to feed not only Egypt, but also all the surrounding nations. “The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands” (Genesis 41:56-57).

B. Is it possible to isolate a principle from the story of Joseph that would help us today to serve the hungry in natural disasters?

1. Where should we begin to search for the principle we need?
   a) First, it is necessary to investigate the activities of Joseph.
   b) Then, we will isolate the principle we need.

2. When did Joseph first encounter the problem of hunger?
   Pharaoh had a dream that was completely incomprehensible to him. He felt the significance of the dream, so he was ready to accept its interpretation from anyone. “It was humiliating to Pharaoh to turn away from the magicians and wise men of his kingdom to consult an alien and a slave, but he was ready to accept the lowliest service if his troubled mind might find relief. Joseph was immediately sent for; he put off his prison attire, and shaved himself, for his hair had grown long during the period of his disgrace and confinement. He was then conducted to the presence of the King” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 220.1).

3. What was the dream talking about?
   “ ‘The dream of Pharaoh is one,’ said Joseph. ‘God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do.’ There were to be seven years of great plenty. Field and garden would yield more abundantly than ever before. And this period was to be followed by seven years of famine. ‘And the plenty shall not be known in the
land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.’ The repetition of the dream was evidence both of the certainty and nearness of the fulfillment” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 220.4)

4. What was the solution to this problem?
   a) It was necessary to find a wise manager for Egypt. “‘Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt’” (Genesis 41:33).
   b) It was also necessary to choose wise governors for the regions of Egypt, so that they would collect a fifth of the harvest in the plentiful harvest years to store in the storehouse. “‘Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years’” (Genesis 41:34).
   c) The harvested crop had to be stored in the cities, but at the disposal of the pharaoh. “‘And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities’” (Genesis 41:35).
   d) This is how the reserve for the years of famine was formed. “‘Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine’” (Genesis 41:36).
   e) “At the very opening of the fruitful years began the preparation for the approaching famine. Under the direction of Joseph, immense storehouses were erected in all the principal places throughout the land of Egypt, and ample arrangements were made for preserving the surplus of the expected harvest. The same policy was continued during the seven years of plenty, until the amount of grain laid in store was beyond computation” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 224.1).

5. What principle do we see in this process?
   a) Here it is clearly seen that God told Joseph the principle of how to help the starving during a natural disaster.
   b) The essence of the principle is to separate a certain part from the received profit to form a reserve from which the issue of assistance to the needy can be resolved.
   c) Let’s call this principle the “Principle of stock formation.”

C. Implementation of the “Principle of stock formation” in the present

1. What trend does humanity expect in the future?
   a) “Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion (Day-Star, March 14, 1846)” (SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 968.11).
   b) Every year there will be more and more natural disasters.
   c) God needs people through whom He can give a surplus of resources. And those people should accumulate this surplus for the needy.
   d) An example of this would be providing assistance to Ukraine.
On February 24, 2022, we woke up very early to rocket explosions. We understood that the war had begun. We needed to go out and evacuate the communities. Everyone had an emergency suitcase prepared. It had everything you needed, but it was very little.

After I evacuated my family and two other pastoral families, I understood that I had to go back 800 km for the others. I understood that many of them would not agree to go. I knew the stores were empty, so I needed to bring something for people to eat. I was looking for products. You could buy something, but I only had $1,000. I bought groceries with all the money I had, but it wasn’t enough.

I got down on my knees and just prayed to God for help. At that time, one pastor brother called me and informed me that the brothers from Hungary had brought him products to deliver to Kyiv. I hurried to this brother, and we loaded my bread. I was driving back with bread for the starving.

My soul was overflowing with gratitude to the brothers from Hungary who, through László Opo, a simple consecrated steward of God, gave us the bread we eat to this day. They did it from their reserves. It happened more than once, and I thank God so much for such people. May God provide them and their descendants with dry bread.

2. Can this principle be used today? What should be done for this?
   a) Yes, it can be used even today.
   b) This requires a desire to become a wise manager of what God provides. Who would like to become a participant in creating a stockpile for those in need?

3. Is anyone insured against natural disasters?
   a) We are not immune to the elements in the last days.
   b) But it is better to collect resources in a special fund to help than to be helped.

4. What is needed to become such a manager?
   “How was Joseph enabled to make such a record of firmness of character, uprightness, and wisdom?—In his early years he had consulted duty rather than inclination; and the integrity, the simple trust, the noble nature, of the youth bore fruit in the deeds of the man. A pure and simple life had favored the vigorous development of both physical and intellectual powers. Communion with God through His works and the contemplation of the grand truths entrusted to the inheritors of faith had elevated and ennobled his spiritual nature, broadening and strengthening the mind as no other study could do. Faithful attention to duty in every station, from the lowliest to the most exalted, had been training every power for its highest service. He who lives in accordance with the Creator’s will is securing to himself the truest and noblest development of character. ‘The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding’ Job 28:28” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 222.2)
III. I invite you on behalf of the Lord to join in His projects

We do not know where the need for bread will arise, but it will not be for us. We can decide from today to keep a certain percentage of our profits in our budget for the needs of low-income people. In Ephesians 4:28 we read, “...rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.” God Himself will complete this work. And He will not forget about you either, because “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given” (Proverbs 19:17).

*All verses are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.