1. The setting for this episode is the Passover one year before the crucifixion (Jn. 6:4).
   a. The Passovers recorded in the Gospel of John help us to establish a timeline for the ministry of Jesus Christ (Jn. 2:13; 6:4; 12:1 & probably 5:1).
   b. This marks the first Passover that Jesus failed to appear in Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 2:41).
   c. In the fall there would be much speculation that Jesus will skip the Feast of Tabernacles as well (Jn. 7:1-2,10-13).
2. The report of John the Baptist's death prompted the Lord to withdraw into “seclusion” (Matt. 14:13).
   a. John accomplished the Father's purpose for his life, and remained faithful until death.
   b. Jesus accomplished the Father's purpose for His life, and the Passover season became a huge test in anticipating His coming death.
3. The return of His Apostles presented additional opportunities for their training (Mk. 6:30-32; Lk. 9:10; Jn. 6:6).
   a. They had to give an account for their ministry (Lk. 9:10 cf. Rom. 14:12; 1st Pet. 3:15; 4:5).
   b. They needed their own seclusion, rest, and food (Mk. 6:30-32).
   c. They needed to learn the 24/7 nature of their ministry (Jn. 6:6).
4. The seclusion did not last long as crowds from the cities followed them.
   a. They followed the Lamb to His secluded place rather than taking their Passover lambs to Jerusalem.
   b. They brought nothing for themselves and received what only He could provide.
   c. When His rest was cut short by additional demands of ministry the Lord felt compassion for the needs of others (Matt. 14:14; Mk. 6:34), and welcomed them (Lk. 9:11).
   d. The crowds needed healing (Mt. 14:14; Lk. 9:11) and teaching (Mk. 6:34; Lk. 9:11). They came because they observed the signs of His Divine commission (Jn. 6:2,14) but will lose that perspective after this event (Jn. 6:15,26).
5. When evening came the disciples wanted the crowds to fend for themselves (Mt. 14:15; Mk. 6:35-36; Lk. 9:12).
   a. They had just completed a training assignment where, as workers, they were worthy of their “hire” and took no bread for themselves (Mt. 10:10; Mk. 6:8; Lk. 9:3).
   b. In this episode they will learn that providing earthly food is entirely appropriate after the provision of spiritual food (Mt. 14:16; Mk. 6:37; Lk. 9:13; Jn. 6:5; cf. Jas. 2:15-16).
6. The crowd of 5,000 men plus women and children would have cost 200 denarii for the meal (Mt. 14:21; Mk. 6:44; Lk. 9:14). The total crowd with women and children may have been 20,000.
   a. The disciples could only think in earthly terms of what they could afford (Mk. 6:37; Lk. 9:13; Jn. 6:7).
   b. Christ illustrated that the Father is not limited to what we can afford.
   c. Our resources are insufficient, but it is our resources that the Father makes use of.
   d. The "lad" that Andrew brings forward has barley loaves—food for the poor.
   παιδάριον paidarion #3808 Hap. (Jn. 6:8 cf. 2nd Kgs. 4:38-44).
7. The Father's provision of bread in the wilderness reminded the crowds of Moses and the promised Prophet that was to come (Dt. 18:15-19; Ps. 132:15).