A Thousand Years

This 1000 years took place in a vision which John saw, but John did not need to live 1000 years to see it. The 1000 years did not take place in earth time. It took place in God's time so to speak, and "a thousand years in [God's] sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:3-5).

We'll find out more about this thousand years as we progress through the rest of this lesson.

Satan Bound

In this vision, Satan is bound and locked in the Abyss for the entire 1000 years (Rev 20:1-3). This represents the impotence of Satan compared to the mighty power of Christ.

In real life of course, Satan tempts and evil is everywhere. Nevertheless Christians are blessed with a ward against evil and so long as they stay at the throne of Jesus Christ, Satan cannot touch them by his temptations (1Co 10:12-13).

Reign with Christ

In this vision, Christ reigns, and his faithful with him, for the entire 1000 years (Rev 20:4). Peter declared that Christ commenced his reign when he ascended to heaven (Acts 2:29-36).

Paul said, "God rescued us from [Satan's] domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col 1:13). John, who understood better than anybody the meaning of the visions he saw, knew that he and his fellow Christians were already reigning with Christ (Rev 1:6).

So the thousand year reign in the vision represents the reign of Christ from his resurrection and ascension until his second coming on Judgment day.

First Resurrection

In this vision there were two resurrections. The first resurrection was at the beginning of the 1000 years. It was a resurrection of those who kept the word of God, and these then reigned with Christ (Rev 20:4-6).

This first resurrection represents the new birth which takes place when one obeys the word of God in baptism (Jhn 3:5-6, Rom 6:1-6).

Beheaded

One does not have to be actually beheaded in order to take part in the first resurrection and thousand year reign. The vision represents a commitment so solid that one stands ready to be killed rather than give up the testimony of Jesus by yielding to Satan.

This commitment is taken on in baptism, where one dies with Christ, is buried with him, and is raised to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3-10). Not every Christian is a martyr in reality, but every Christian must be a martyr at heart.

Mark of the Beast

The mark or number of the beast represents allegiance to the kingdom of Satan and to the spirit of Antichrist. This is typified by the Roman empire and its idolatry.

The number of the beast is 666. In Roman numerals this is DCLXVI — the inferior numerals in descending order: 500+100+50+10+5+1=666. Because 666 can be represented by this significantly ordered Roman numeral set, it identifies the Roman empire as the Beast, and its emperor as the "man".

Second Death

In this vision, the other resurrection was at the end of the 1000 years. It was a resurrection of "the rest of the dead" — those who had not obeyed the word of God.

Those in this second resurrection were subject to the second death, but those who had a part in the first resurrection had no part in the second death, but rather entered into eternal life in the heavenly city (Rev 20:5-6, 22:14-15).