Answer: The Bible clearly teaches that there are two distinct resurrections, each with its own significance in God’s redemptive plan.

The First Resurrection

The first resurrection primarily concerns the redeemed—the saints—who are raised to eternal life. This resurrection is mentioned in several key places:

At Jesus’ resurrection, Matthew 27:52-53 (ESV) says:

> The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

This event foreshadows the power of Christ over death and His promise of resurrection for all believers.

The first resurrection also includes the saints who will be caught

up to meet Christ at His second coming (often referred to as the rapture). Though not explicitly called a resurrection in some texts, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 clarifies that the dead in Christ will be raised first:

> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command... and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Additionally, Revelation 20:4-6 (ESV) describes those who reign with Christ during His millennial kingdom, indicating they have part in the first resurrection:

> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power...

Theologically, the first resurrection signifies victory over the “second death” (eternal separation from God) and ushers

believers into their reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom. It highlights the already-but-not-yet tension of Christian eschatology—the believer's resurrection is certain but fully realized at Christ's return.

The Second Resurrection

The second resurrection occurs after the 1,000-year reign, marking the resurrection of all who did not partake in the first. These are the unsaved dead who face judgment:

Revelation 20:11-15 (ESV) describes this great white throne judgment:

> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it... The dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done... And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

This resurrection leads to eternal condemnation for those whose names are not found in the Book of Life. It demonstrates God's

righteous judgment and the final defeat of death and evil.

Theological Implications

Blessedness of the First Resurrection: Those who participate in the first resurrection are described as “blessed and holy,” for they are spared the second death (Revelation 20:6). This is a promise of eternal security for the redeemed.

The Second Death: The “second death” refers to eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, underscoring the eternal consequences of rejecting Christ’s salvation (Revelation 21:8).

Hope and Urgency: Believers are exhorted to remain faithful and vigilant so that they may be found worthy of this first resurrection (Luke 21:36). The resurrection assures Christians that death is not the end, but a gateway to eternal life or judgment.

In summary, the two resurrections mark God’s ultimate plan for humanity:

1. The first resurrection brings eternal life and reign with Christ

for the saved.

2. The second resurrection brings judgment and eternal separation from God for the unsaved.

May this truth encourage you to live in the hope of the resurrection and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

God bless you richly.

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