CHAPTER NINE

THE ORIGIN OF PAUL'S GLORY-CHRISTOLOGY

This investigation seeks to answer how and why Paul came to identify Jesus as Glory. The thesis defended below can be simply stated: the Damascus Christophany is the interpretive "origin" of Paul's δόξα-Christology. That is, the vision of the resurrected and exalted Jesus, the Christophany, was the catalyst for the apostle's designation of Christ as δόξα.

Support for the thesis outlined above hinges upon the establishment of two key points--(1) the definition and significance of the Christophany within narrative world generated by the letters of Paul; and (2) within the interpretive context provided by the tradition-history of Glory, the Damascus Christophany must be shown to be the interpretive catalyst for Paul's identification of Christ as δόξα. Before turning to establishing these two points in several key Christophany texts, it will be helpful to survey the way in which others have understood the Christophany. Such a typological survey will act heuristically and pedagogically for the discussion which follows.

A. APPROACHES TO PAUL'S CHRISTOPHANY

Since the turn of the century, the Damascus Christophany has suffered through some rather lean years in Pauline scholarship. Though the Christophany is often mentioned, the general tendency in scholarship has been to downplay its importance for understanding Paul. One reason for the Christophany's poor hearing is the perception that Paul does not refer to it in his letters. Günther Bornkamm justifies his dismissal of the Christophany because he believes that Paul spoke of his
conversion "surprisingly seldom."\(^1\) Bornkamm sees Galatians 1:11-17 and Philippians 3:2-11 as the only two places where Paul refers to the Christophany, and Paul does so only to defend his "call" to be a preacher of the gospel and never in an attempt to lay claim to a "revelatio specialissima."\(^2\) If Bornkamm is to be believed, Paul's few references to the Damascus Christophany are contextually determined and have little to do with the content of his gospel or his theology.

Paul refers to the Christophany many more times than is often assumed.\(^3\) (1) In 1 Corinthians 9:1 Paul defends his apostolic freedom on the basis of his Christophany. (2) Paul coordinates the Christophany with (other) resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15:3-11. (3) The autobiographical statements of Galatians 1:11-17 and Philippians 3:2-11 highlight the Christophany as the turning point in Paul's religious life. (4) References to the Christophany permeate 2 Corinthians 3:4-4:6: the comparison of the old and new covenants--with their representative administrators, Moses and Paul.\(^4\) (5) In Romans 10:2-4 Paul reads the history of Israel in light of his own conversion experience.\(^5\) (6) When Paul speaks of the divine "necessity" (ἀνάγκη) to preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9:16-17), the

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4 Dunn, "Light," 259.