WHY YOU BECAME A CALVINIST

Vulnerabilities that led to your Captivity

BEYOND THE FUNDAMENTALS
COMMENTS OF A CALVINIST

- you seem to forget
  that I just told you that when I began on
  this journey, I PRESUPPOSED your
  position, not the Calvinist position. You
  simply cannot tell me that I set out to
  prove Calvinism correct. That's just a
  convenient lie.

I know that personally, I began my
deeper studies of God's Word
attempting to DISprove Calvinism. My
presuppositions at that stage in my life
were contrary to what I found in God's
Word. That experience makes it
difficult for me to take your charge
against me seriously.

sorry bro, I did not
hold the Calvinism light. I was not a
classical Armenian. I just held to basic
free will and all of the tenants that most
Evangelical Christians today believe.

The bottom line is I disagree with your
assertion that Calvinists are imaginative
in order to conclude Calvinism. It's
speculative on your part and also
ignores the wealth of reformed exegesis
that have been done throughout the
centuries.
Calvinists think that they were like present-day non-Calvinists before becoming Calvinist. So they see themselves as advanced beyond their previous non-Calvinism, and they see everyone else as inferior and remedial in comparison to themselves, given their current “enlightened” state.
Vulnerabilities are weaknesses waiting to be exploited by a virus or other malicious actor who wants unauthorized access to your sense-making system.
These are beliefs which are not unique to Calvinism, but that make a person susceptible to Calvinism.

The Calvinist thinks that they were like any other non-Calvinist before they became a Calvinist, but that’s not true. They were full of vulnerabilities that were exploited. They have never been in a position where these vulnerabilities have been remedied.
Vulnerabilities – known or unknown weaknesses that can be exploited by a malicious actor, or that can be inadvertently triggered by unwitting exposure to pollution in the information ecology.

Zero-Day Virus – malicious code (information) installed into the sense-making system, and intentionally left dormant until a specific time that it will be exploited.
I can trick your sense-making system into thinking that something bad is regular network traffic. For example, I can expose you to the phrase “saved by the blood of the crucified one” every Sunday for 15 years so that you think its normal network traffic. And then I come along and attach a false doctrine to that little packet of information, and it makes it through your system because it was attached and based on a false premise that you’ve been accepting as normal network traffic for years. I can either attach a false doctrine to it or base an argument on it. Our goal is to find the things that our sense-making system thinks is normal network traffic but are in reality false presumptions upon which larger false doctrines can ride as a payload.

These things make us unequipped to operate in the arena of facts and logic, because we are working with a presumed set of “facts” that are really “facts” at all. But you don’t know what they are. We call these presuppositions. We want to discover them and eliminate them.
The solution to these types of problems isn’t just changing from wrong conclusions to correct conclusions (which is a huge problem with how these things are typically handled). It’s a matter of finding the errors in the thought processes and underlying assumption before conclusions are even sought.

The problem isn’t so much with WHAT was concluded, but with HOW it was concluded.

If something is objectively and fundamentally true, we can rest in the fact that sound epistemological processes plus interest plus availability of correct information will result in a person concluding that truth, given enough time.
People don’t realize that the vulnerabilities are not overtly or professedly Calvinistic vulnerabilities. So they don’t know the difference between naive pre-Calvinism vs. wise, informed non-Calvinism.
Any effective lie has to have something to hook onto. If you already believe a lie, you’ve just given me more terrain to use. You’ve just given me more opportunities to attach false doctrine to a piece of information that you already hold as a belief. Instead of being limited to scripture and having to make something look or sound scriptural, now I have more territory, and can make my false doctrine look and sound like it’s compliant with a variety of other things that you already believe which are found nowhere in scripture. These things serve as carriers of information pollution payloads. They are enablers. They are essentially trojan horses into which all manner of malicious content can be packed.
Bad Heuristics
Epistemological hijacking

Bad Signatures/Definitions
White-listing wrong ideas
(like ‘virus definitions’)
EPISTEMIC VULNERABILITIES
These are BAD ideas that lead to Calvinism.

• Unwittingly willing to defect on one’s own sense-making and modify one’s own beliefs in order to normalize with the group.
• Succumb to in-group conformity pressure as an input to the epistemological process.
• Thinking that you are somehow humble or holy or right to outsource your sense-making to dead men. (manipulative, bullying)
• Thinking in terms of correct conclusions/beliefs rather than in terms of valid informational processes.
• Thinking that there is safety or correctness in having a written code of mandatory tenants.
• Thinking that consensus has something to do with correctness.
• Thinking that “orthodoxy” has validity.
• Not understanding the relationship between your own intuition and your clever ability to rationalize wrong intuitions.
EPISTEMIC VULNERABILITIES

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- Unity is more valuable than specificity and precision.
- Lack of specificity is trivial.
- Unawareness of when verbal framing is leading one away from epistemic principles or standards.
- Paradigmatic conservation. (I must interpret scripture in a way that supports XYZ prior held belief {i.e. Total Depravity})
- If someone’s a “man of God,” they cannot make any mistakes or errors and should not be questioned.”
- Memorizing facts and lists of beliefs constitutes spiritual growth.
- Approval from spiritual mentors is meaningful and desirable.
- Degrees and credentials legitimize people’s views.
- If something comes from a person with a degree, I can accept it without checking it.
- Discernment is only a gift and not a skill that can be cultivated. Those with the “gift of discernment” should be trusted without question.
EPISTEMIC VULNERABILITIES

These are BAD ideas that lead to Calvinism.

- Belief in doctrines is more important that testing the processes by which they were formulated or concluded.
- The statement of faith is a good stopping point for doctrinal development and truth discovery. There is no work left for me to do in that area.
- A good/true/valid/sound insight should be discarded if it hasn’t also appeared in the past.
- Good a priori axioms should be used to approach and interpret scripture.
- Not knowing the difference between moral or factual arguments.
- Categorical unawareness of presuppositions.
- Failure to critically examine what is taught in church.
- An appearance that god gets more glory in a certain situation form a human-reasoning stand-point is more weighty than scriptural authority.
- Believing that a claim that scripture is one’s authority means that it is.
You can possess these vulnerabilities and not be a Calvinist for a variety of reasons. However, if a non-Calvinist with these vulnerabilities is teaching other Christians, they will pass these vulnerabilities along, and only fatten people up for the kill. Calvinists love to convert unprepared Christians to their paradigm. Instilling these vulnerabilities in Christians makes the Calvinist persuasion job very easy.
Things Calvinists will say:

When discussing how the Cornelius narrative in Acts 10 (& 11 & 15) is a very strong demonstration of there being no Total Depravity, a Calvinist will respond with, “Well, I just presume that God is in complete control of the conversion process. You must think that Cornelius just awakened in his own spirituality because he was better than other people.”

- this tactic slyly deviates away from the content of the text toward a moral argument. The Calvinist is essentially saying, “I grant God more control than you and I don’t give man (Cornelius) as much credit as you, therefore I’m justified in holding my view as correct because I have the glory of God and the humility of man in their proper place. They might not even realize this, but they just supplanted their personal view of the glory of God and the humility of man as holding a higher authority than scripture.
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In this case, the professedly agreed upon facts (scripture) do not really matter. The Calvinist thinks he is a morally better person if he holds this view. Conversationally, just for the sake of appealing to things that they value, it might be a good time to temporarily shift the conversation away from the facts of scripture and toward something that they value. For example, ask, “Which attribute would give God more glory, having absolute control from an imperfect human perspective, or having accuracy in communicating?”

Remember, scriptural authority is the standard. Use their own way of thinking to guide them back to the standard.
Things Calvinists will say:

“Who in church history agrees with your view?”

This appeals to conformity pressure, consensus pressure, and to outsourcing one’s sense-making to other people.

Does having a consensus with anyone from the past make any view more epistemologically sound? – NO!
If I find a correct person or group from history, should I just believe everything they wrote and stop conducting my own sense-making? – NO!

Is it okay if sound epistemological processes lead you to disagree with an historically respected person? - Yes!

So what role do these past people play in our epistemological endeavors, if any?

This kind of question from a Calvinist is a begging the question, presuming that having someone agree from the past has any bearing on the soundness of epistemological processes or conclusions. It is a trick question. If you list no one, you are a rogue heretic. If you list any person or group, they will only associate you with something false that they also believed. It’s a catch 22 situation, so know how to ask about the validity of the question itself. Learn to get to the underlying epistemology (or lack thereof) that is driving the comments and questions.
Things Calvinists will say:

A Christian was coming out of a Calvinistic situation, and began to object to the falsehood of the system. This person was rebuked by a Calvinist with a moral objection, not a substantive one. She said, “I was told I should just be thankful that the Lord saved me ... and that I’m unstable.”

Calvinists are known to say, “I don’t know why the Lord chose me, I’m forever grateful that he did.”

These kinds of statements shift the focus away from the substance of the issue and toward morality. What the person is really saying is that they are a better person because they are more thankful. This alleviates them of having to defend the paradigm. It can potentially make a person self-conscious about not being thankful enough, and it replaces scriptural authority with a passive aggressive virtue superiority contest about who is more thankful, and therefore more spiritual, and therefore more likely to be getting led by the Holy Spirit (and the Spirit’s subsequent fruit) to their view of this doctrinal issue. “The spirit leading me to be thankful is correlative with the spirit also leading me to be correct about this issue of Calvinism.”
This shifts the focus away from the substantive correctness of the Calvinist view of ‘election’ and shifts it toward the person’s attitude toward it, presuming the view to be factual. It employs a false humility which suggests that any who disagrees must be arrogant. In other words, his view of election makes him a more moral person than you.
Predestination is about sinners being predestinated to conversion, with or without foreknowledge.

“Election” is a doctrine about God choosing people to be saved.

Predestination and Election go together and can be used interchangeably.

People are chosen to be saved based on God’s foreknowledge that they would believe.

Adoption occurs at conversion (rather that Romans 8:23).

Adoption is how sinners become sons of God.

There is an “inward call” and an “outward call.”

People are saved by Christ’s death.

People are saved by “the atonement.”

The Holy Spirit draws.

These are BAD ideas that lead to Calvinism.
PRESUPPOSITIONALLY WHITE-LISTING VIRUS DEFINITIONS

These are BAD ideas that lead to Calvinism.

- Unbelief is the unpardonable sin.
- Unbelief is the only sin that Jesus didn’t pay for.
- Sinners are saved by the blood of Christ.
- When Christ said, “it is finished,” that secured salvation for the redeemed.
- Salvation was secured on the cross.
- People in the Old Testament were regenerated.
- “Sovereignty” is a Bible word or biblical concept.
- “Died to save” is a Biblical concept.
- Prevenient Grace.
- Sinners pay for their sins in hell.
- People go to hell for sin.
- I should defend the concept of free will or libertarian free will.
PRESUPPOSITIONALLY WHITE-LISTING VIRUS DEFINITIONS

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- Arminianism is the opposite of Calvinism.
- Arminianism is an umbrella term appropriate for all non-Calvinistic viewpoints.
- Romans 9 has something to do with predestination.
- Romans 9 explains why modern-day Gentiles do and do not get saved.
POLLUTING THE INFORMATION ECOLOGY
When the Calvinist says, “I used to believe like you before I was a Calvinist.” That’s an absolute lie when they say it to me. They have never believed like I currently believe. They used to believe THIS STUFF. I don’t believe this stuff. Their belief in this stuff is why they became Calvinistic. These things were the vulnerabilities that were exploited by sermons, mentors, discussions, arguments, books. Later, they will make the claim that they just became a Calvinist by reading the Bible. Impossible. They became a Calvinist because of these vulnerabilities, among others that aren’t listed here.
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- People are saved by "the assurance."
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