

# Who is John Galt?

September 6, 2009

Mark 8.27-30

## ❖ “Things Are Named After Famous People”

- Cities are filled with such things
- Lake Zorinsky is named for former Omaha mayor and US Senator Ed Zorinsky
- The Henry Doorly Zoo is named for Henry Doorly
- Joslyn Castle named for George and Sarah Joslyn ~ from Vermont in 1887
- The Rose Theatre is named for Rose Blumkin (aka Mrs. B – NFM founder)
- Our capitol of Lincoln is named for President Lincoln

## ❖ John Galt Boulevard

- We moved to our present home in 1994 ~ “½ way to Lincoln”
- When we’d drive east on Q Street to 108<sup>th</sup> we’d pass John Galt Boulevard
  - I assumed John Galt was some local politician or wealthy businessman
  - A few years later I read ‘*Atlas Shrugged*’ (1957) by Ayn Rand
  - The opening line of the book is “*Who is John Galt?*”
  - I recognized that this was the street here in Omaha

## ❖ “Who is John Galt?”

- As the reader you learn how to interpret this phrase through the context
- This is a throwaway phrase spoken by many people in the story
- It means, “*That question can’t be answered... , or*
  - *or “Don’t ask important questions.”*
  - *or “I don’t know. I don’t care.”*
- But as the story unfolds the phrase is spoken by some with a knowing smile...
  - You eventually learn that John Galt is a “real” person
  - Learning this is an epiphany for the main character, Dagny Taggart

➤ **Xition: This sermon is topical ...**

### ❖ “This is a ‘topical sermon’”

- When I started in Lincoln I said these are hard and I would avoid them ...
  - But then, I’m not in Lincoln today ... ;-)
  - I’ll reference a lot of Bible text ~ but not exegete a few verses in depth
  - This will be a broad sweep on two topics
- ‘Atlas Shrugged’ serves as an extended metaphor for this message ...

### ❖ Summary of “Atlas Shrugged”

- Written by Ayn Rand ~ published in 1957
  - One of her earlier books, “Fountainhead” had already been very successful
- It is a dystopian novel that portrays the effects of worldwide socialism
  - e.g., Great Britain is now the “People’s State of Britain”
- The US government is passing collectivist laws that result in the:
  - death of capitalism ~ rampant destruction of wealth
  - demonization of personal ambition and wealth,
  - nationwide poverty ~ centralization of power ~ leading to cronyism and
  - the breakdown of society and law around the world
- Characters
  - Protagonist: VP of Operations of Taggart Transcontinental, Dagny Taggart
  - Antagonists: Collectivists (and Galt ~ whom she refers to as the Destroyer)
  - Eventually she and you are challenged to view Galt as the real protagonist

### ❖ Main Premise of “Atlas Shrugged”

- The premise of the book is, “What are the bright and ambitious to do?”
  - The answer is they go on “**Strike!**” just as common laborers do ...
  - Steel mfgs, Car mfgs, Plane mfgs, composers, mathematicians, judges
  - They’re all moving to a secret enclave in the Colorado Mountains
  - The heart of this strike is John Galt and various former captains of industry
  - One day the owners of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Motor Co collectivized it
    - The chairman stood and declared, “*This is a crucial moment in the history of mankind! Remember that none of us may now leave this place, for each of us belongs to all the others by the moral law which we all accept.*”

- John Galt stood up and said, *"I don't. I will put an end to this once and for all."*
- The chairman called out, *"How?"*
- Galt replied, *"I will stop the motor of the world."*
- John Galt had invented an engine that converted static to kinetic energy
- Ayn Rand's philosophy of objectivism is visibly woven throughout the book

### ❖ **Two Main Points of Sermon**

1. First ~ Review the 4 legitimate governments ~ inception and defects
  2. Second ~ Compare and contrast John Galt with Jesus
- *"What are the legitimate governments of the Earth?"*

### ❖ **Four Governments Instituted (Individual, Family, Ecclesiastical, Civil)**

- III: Show 4-Government diagrams
- Each government has legitimacy by God's design
- Individual
  - **Gen 1.26-28** ~ take dominion, fill the earth and subdue it (role)
  - **Gen 2.15-17** ~ tend garden, obey God's commands (responsibility)
  - **Gen 3.16-19** ~ Adam and Eve cursed (accountability)
  - **Gen 4.6-7** ~ Cain's rebellion (responsibility); Gen 4.10-12 (accountability)
- Family:
  - **Gen 2.18, 24** ~ woman created to help man (roles, one family)
  - **Gen 4.10** ~ family responsibility, accountability (family roles)
- Church:
  - **Gen 14.18-20** ~ Melchizedek ~ priest of God Most High (church, mediator)
- Civil:
  - **Gen 4.10-12** ~ Cain punished (failure of civic responsibility)
  - **Gen 14** ~ Concept of kings introduced (not necessarily normative)
  - **Gen 14.18** ~ Melchizedek was God's Priest **and** King of Salem (normative?)
  - **Gen 41.39-41** ~ Joseph put in charge of all of Egypt (by God's design)
  - **Ex 18.21-23** ~ Rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds, thousands (order)
  - **1 Sam 8.6-8** ~ God allows for a king in Israel

➤ **Xition: The governments are all defective ...**

#### ❖ **Four Governments Defective (Individual, Family, Ecclesiastical, Civil)**

- Each government is defective due to man's sin
  - Individual: Cain killed Abel, consciences seared, temptation, prone to evil
  - Family: Husbands and wife argue, parents estranged from children, rivalry
  - Church: Pastors abuse or neglect flock, people abandon the church
  - Civil: Leaders morally corrupt, seize power, steal money, dispense favors

#### ❖ **Four Governments Abuse Jurisdictions (Individual, Family, Ecclesiastical, Civil)**

- Each government should recognize the legitimacy and jurisdiction of all others
- Each government can neglect or abuse its lawful authority
  - Individual: Judge one another, disrespect one another, act irresponsibly
  - Family: Abandons nurturing of children, abdicates to church/state
  - Church: Intrude into family lives, abandons authority to the state
  - Civil: Intrude into lives of individuals, families and churches without cause
- III: Rifqa Bary, 17-year old girl from Muslim family became Christian
  - She fled from Ohio to a church in Florida
  - *"All jurisdictions involved!"* Individual, Family, 2 Churches, 2 States

#### ❖ **The Biblical Emphasis in Regards to the 4 Governments**

- The different Testaments and different books emphasize different governments
  - Individual: Present in Old and New Testaments (spiritual emphasis in New)
  - Family: Emphasized equally in Old and New Testaments
  - Church: Emphasized in both (extensively altered -> from law to grace)
  - Civil: Emphasized mostly in Old Testament ~ largely ignored in New
    - But the New Testament is built atop the Old Testament
      - ◆ *"New in the Old Concealed... Old in the New Revealed..."*
      - ◆ God didn't need to review the role of Civil government in the New
      - ◆ Some regard the OT as only history and as having no guidance value
- Christ often addresses people as individuals (*governmentally, jurisdictionally*)
  - Christians confuse Christ's words as applicable to civil realm
    - *"If you see a brother in need you should feed him ..."* ~ welfare
  - Churches confuse Christ's words as applicable to church and civil realms
- Paul often addresses people as church members

### ❖ I Love this book “*Atlas Shrugged*”

- It clearly portrays evil at work in government
  - both civil and individual ~ ignores family and church
- It's been influential in educating people about the evils of socialism
  - And by way of contrast, the superiority of capitalism
  - Good quote on America from the book:
    - *“If you ask me to name the proudest distinction of Americans, I would choose, because it contains all the others, the fact that they were the people who created the phrase to ‘make money’. No other language or nation had ever used these words before; men had always thought of wealth as a static quantity- to be seized, begged, inherited, shared, looted or obtained as a favor. Americans were the first to understand that wealth has to be created.”*

### ❖ Similarities between John Galt and Jesus

- Humble origin ~ (son of auto assembly line worker / son of carpenter)
- Uniquely gifted ~ (invents amazing engine / heals people & does miracles)
- Visionary leader ~ (conceives strike & leads people / 1,000's follow)
- Brave Fighter ~ (opposed looters & moochers / opposed hypocritical scribes)
- Both names are used in meaningless phrase ~ despair and frustration

### ❖ Differences between John Galt and Jesus

- John Galt is proud and prideful ~ Jesus humbled Himself beyond measure
- John Galt is self-centered ~ Jesus is selfless
- John Galt is self-serving ~ Jesus is sacrificial

### ❖ Xition: Characteristics between John and Jesus

### ❖ Proud vs. Humble

- John Galt ~ *"Pride is the recognition of the fact that you are your own highest value and, like all of man's values, it has to be earned." ~ i.e., "you're nothing unless you succeed"*
- Jesus ~ *"... whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14.11)*

### ❖ Self-Centered vs. Selfless

- John Galt ~ *"I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine." ~ (oath to gain entrance to city)*
- Paul speaking of himself and Jesus ~ *"Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20.34-35)*

### ❖ Self-Serving vs. Sacrificial

- John Galt ~ *"My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."*
- Jesus ~ *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3.16-17)*

### ❖ I love this book but it's flawed

- It doesn't view the governments biblically as I've described them
- Individualism looms large in this book ~ and in the philosophy of objectivism
- Family and Church are apparently irrelevant
- The individual is everything ~ and civil government is not to be trusted

**Xition: In closing ...**

❖ **Be a capitalist by all means ~ But don't be a John Galt**

➤ **1 John 2.15-17** ~ *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

- But we are in the world ~ And we are commanded to love one another
  - Our love of God must be greater than our love for all else
  - !!!: Paul Tripp ran out of house with new 8 stringed guitar ~ not children
  - God will test the love of our hearts from time to time

❖ **Benediction**