

# Onramp to the Postmodern Conversation

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the church **emerging**

**in a postal age**

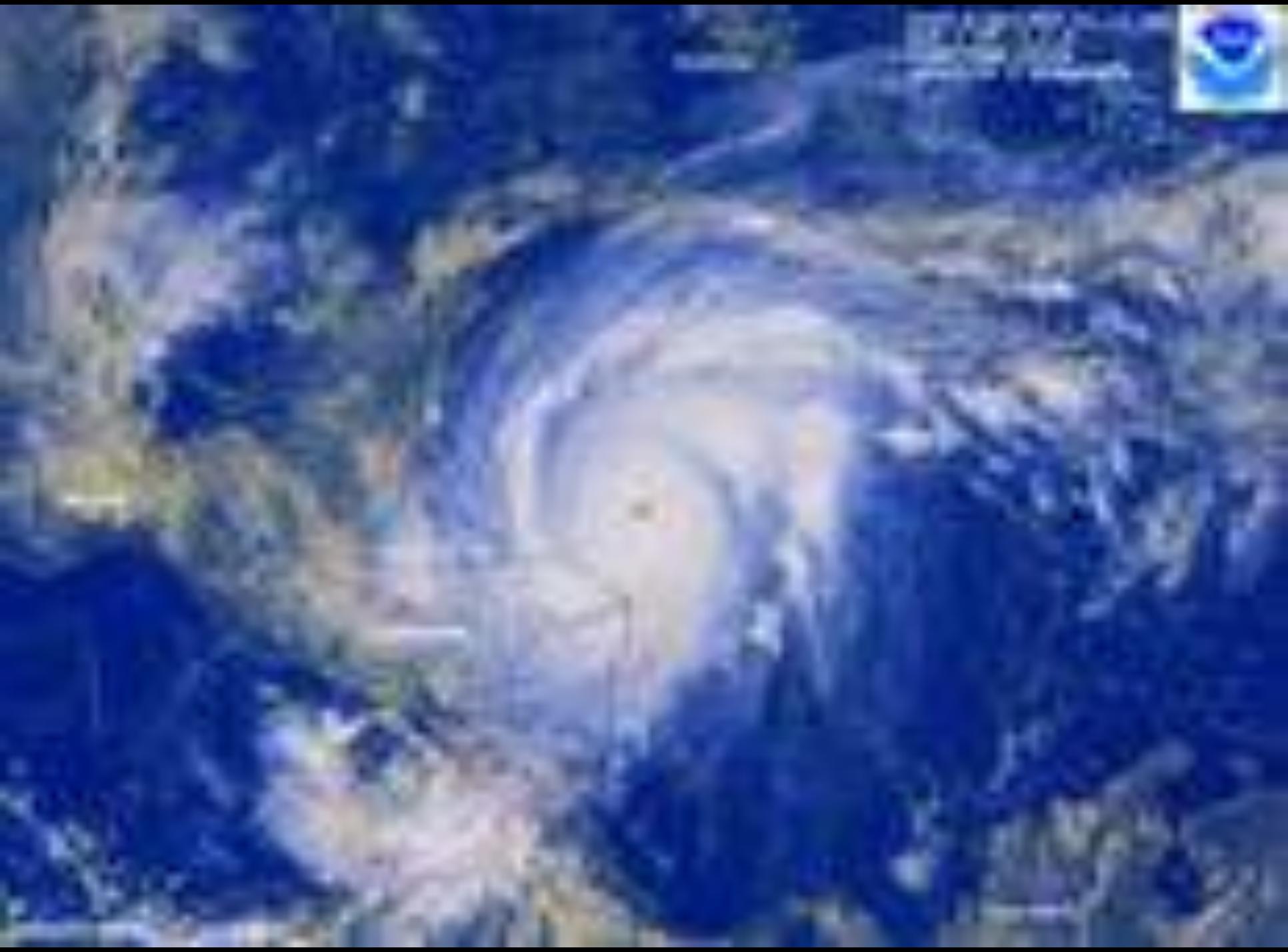
# Psalm 131

A song of ascents. Of David.

My heart is not proud, O LORD,  
my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters  
or things too wonderful for me.

But I have stilled and quieted my soul;  
like a weaned child with its mother,  
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

O Israel, put your hope in the LORD  
both now and forevermore.







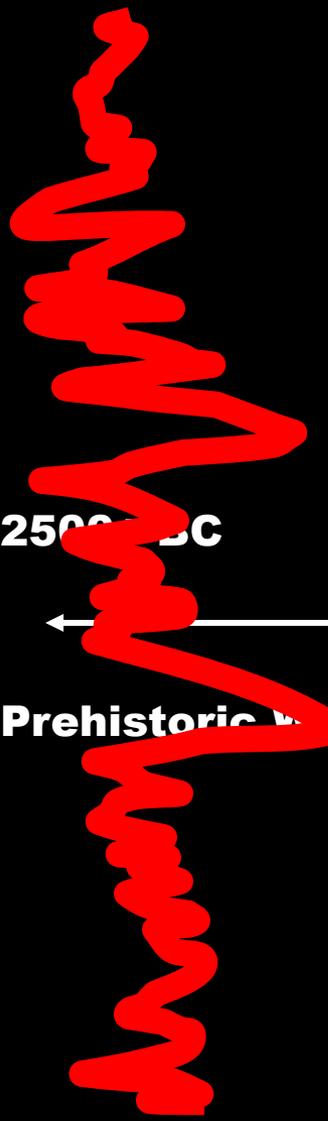
In your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. *Always be prepared* to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

1 Peter 3:15-16

**2500+ BC**



**Prehistoric World**



**2500 BC**

**Prehistoric World**



**2500 BC - 500 AD**



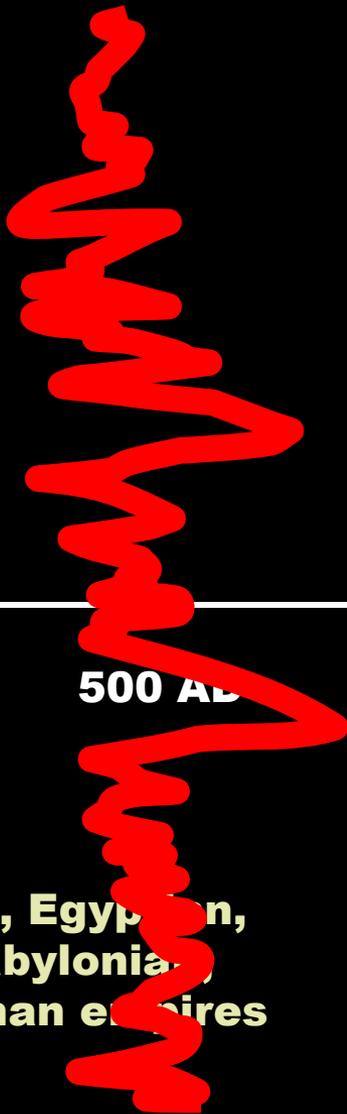
**500 BC**

**1 AD**

**500 AD**

**Ancient World**

**Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian,  
Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian,  
Persian, Greek, Roman empires**



**2500 BC - 500 AD**



**500 BC**

**1 AD**

**500 AD**

**Ancient World**

**Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian,  
Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian,  
Persian, Greek, Roman empires**

**2500 BC - 500 AD**

**500 AD - 1500 AD**



**500 BC**

**1 AD**

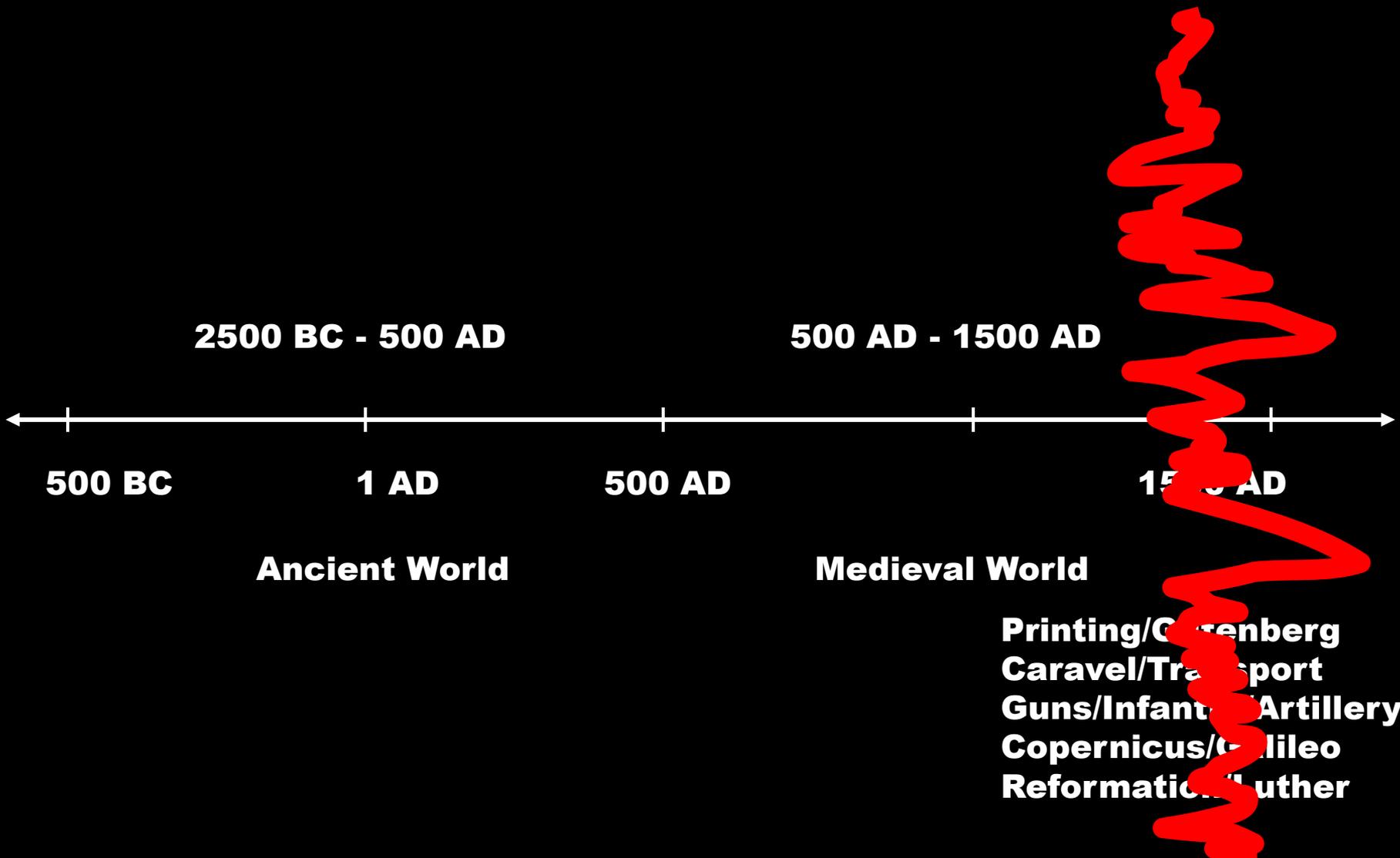
**500 AD**

**1500 AD**

**Ancient World**

**Medieval World**

**Printing/Gutenberg**  
**Caravel/Transport**  
**Guns/Infantry/Artillery**  
**New Economy**  
**Copernicus/Galileo**  
**Reformation/Luther**



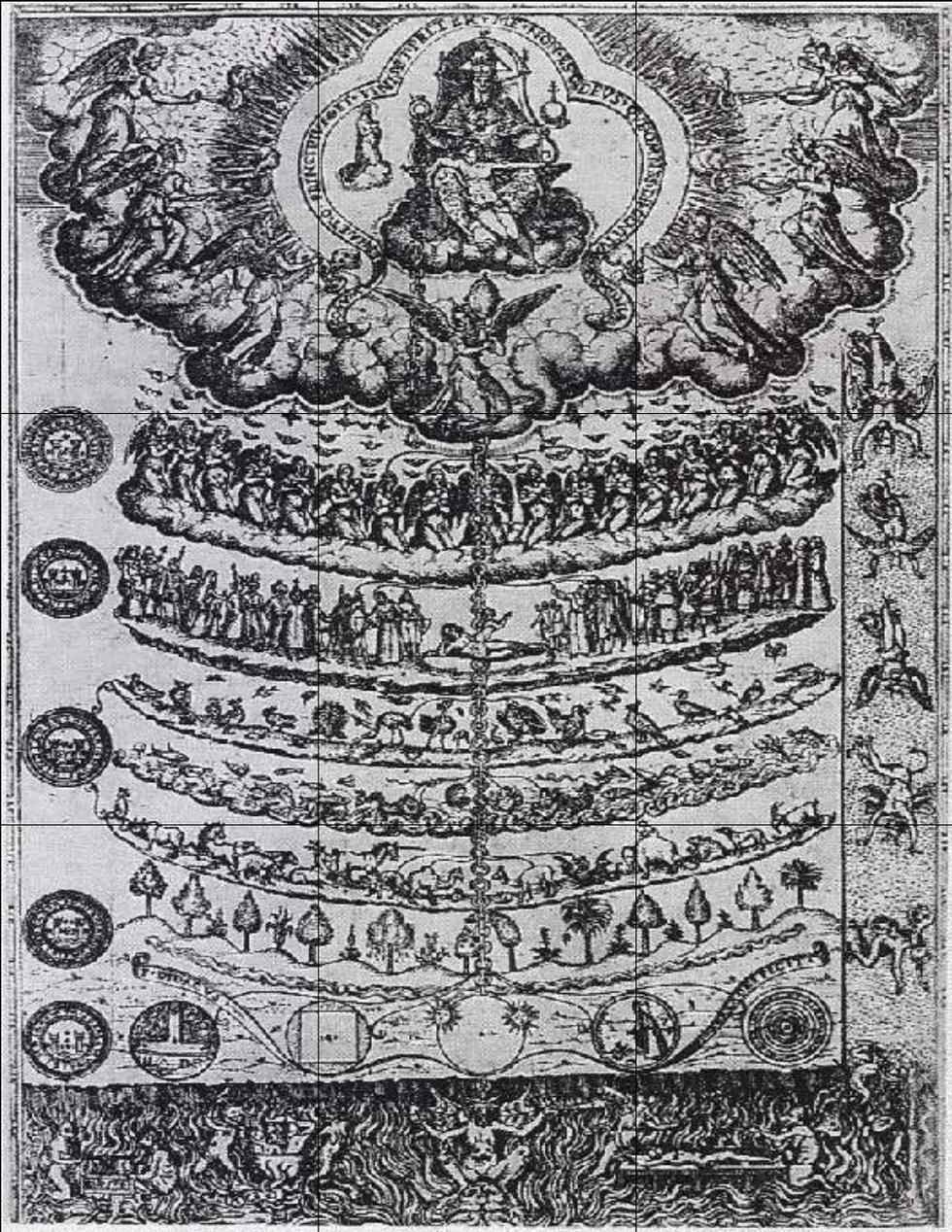


**'The new Philosophy calls all in doubt,  
The Element of fire is quite put out;  
The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no  
man's wit  
Can well direct him where to look for it.  
Tis all in peeces, all cohaerance gone;  
All just supply, and all relation:  
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are  
things forgot,  
For everyman alone thinkes he hath got  
To be a Phoenix, and there can bee  
None of that kinde, of which he is, but  
hee.**

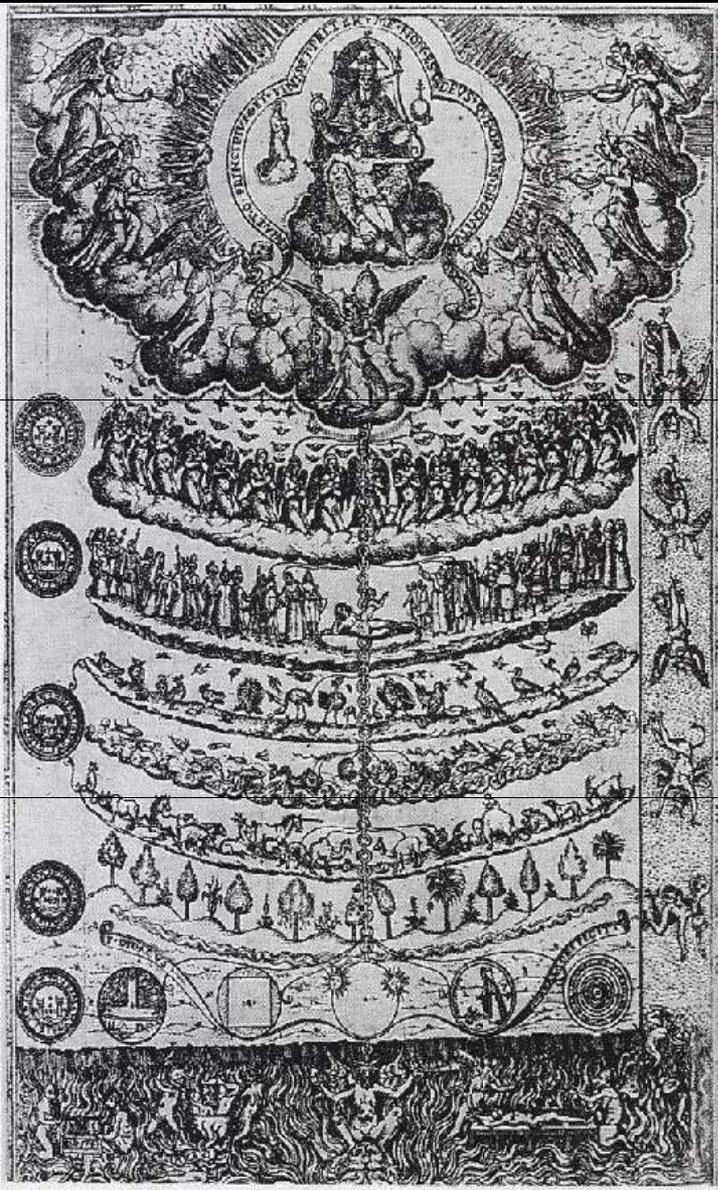
**John Donne, 1611 (1572-1631)**



**The  
great  
chain of  
being**



**Is an “unchained”  
universe a  
liberated universe  
or a fragmented  
universe, cast  
adrift?**



**“Nature and Nature's  
laws lay hid in night:**

**God said, "Let Newton  
be!" and all was light.”**

**Alexander Pope (1688-1744)**

***Epitaph Intended for Sir Isaac  
Newton (1642-1727)***



**Consider the poetic  
metaphor:**

**LAWS OF NATURE ...**

**The universe becomes a  
courtroom, God the  
lawgiver and king/judge ...**

**Natural Law and Revealed  
Law**



The 10 Spheres are gone ...

The Great Chain is gone ...

But order has returned:

Invisible and universal rules,  
principles, laws, patterns,  
standards, systems.

The Divine Right of Kings  
and popes is gone:



The divinely sanctioned system has come.

**1500 AD - 2000 AD**

**1950 AD - ???**



**1500 AD**

**1750 AD**

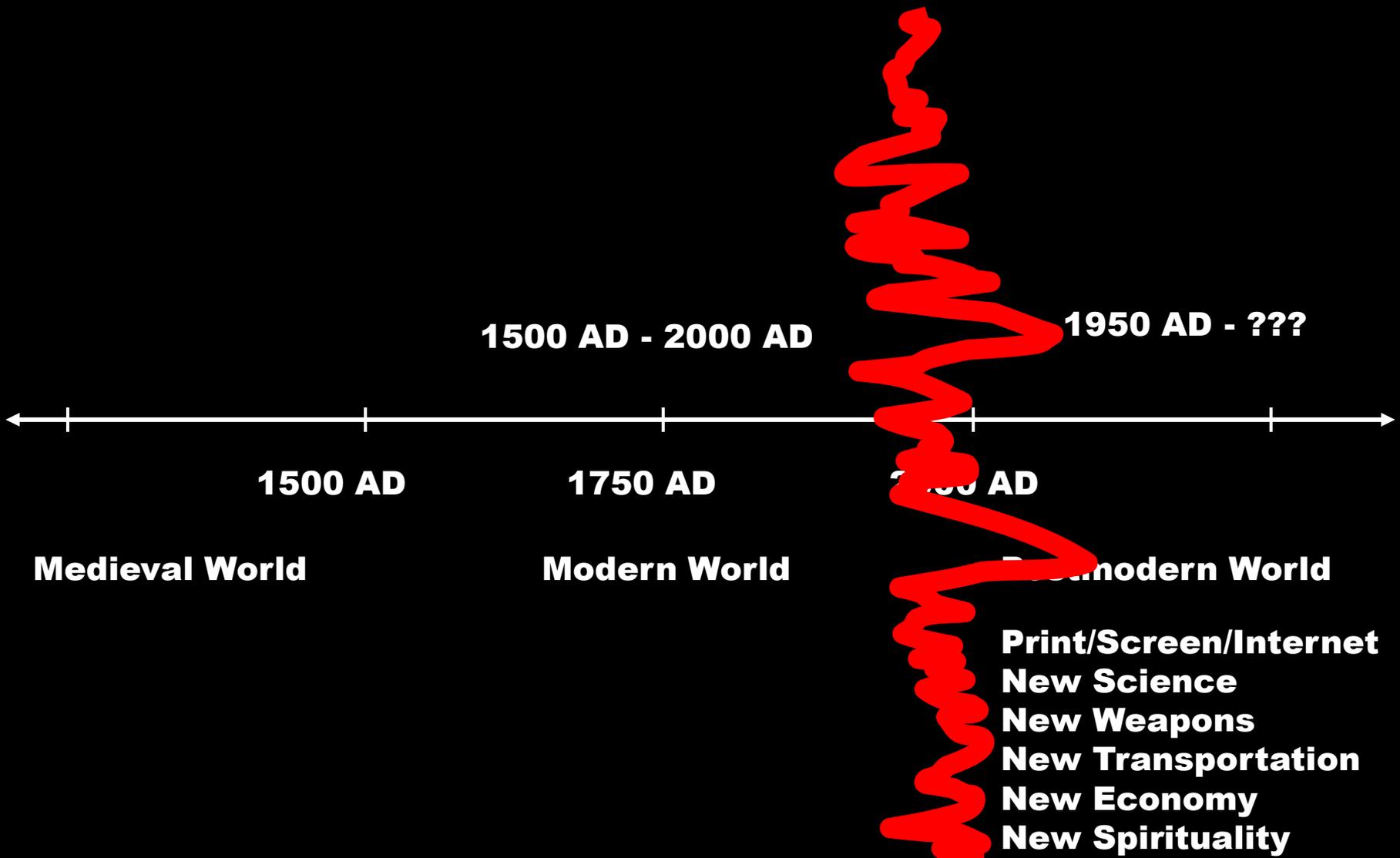
**2000 AD**

**Medieval World**

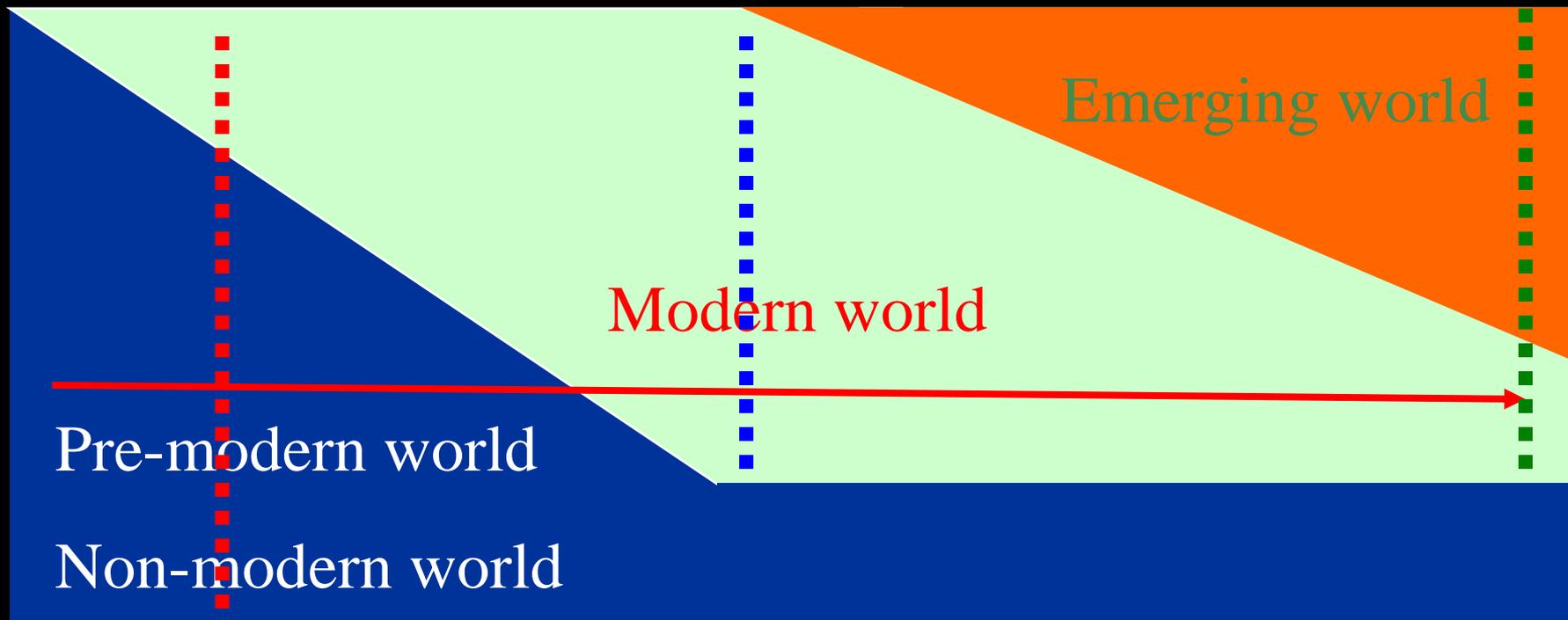
**Modern World**

**Postmodern World**

- Print/Screen/Internet**
- New Science**
- New Weapons**
- New Transportation**
- New Economy**
- New Spirituality**



Consider that we live in at least three worlds.



2007

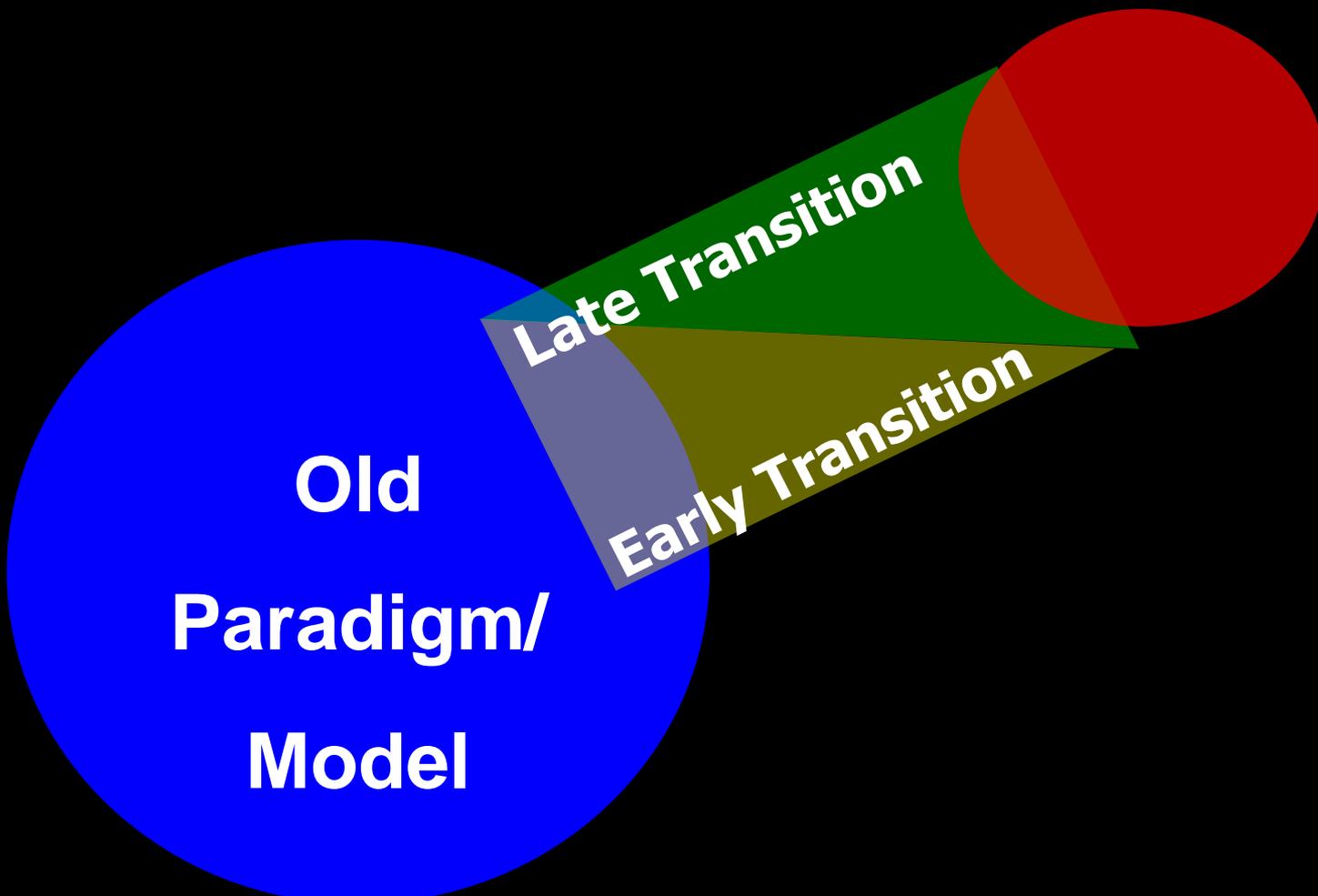
# Themes of Postmodernity

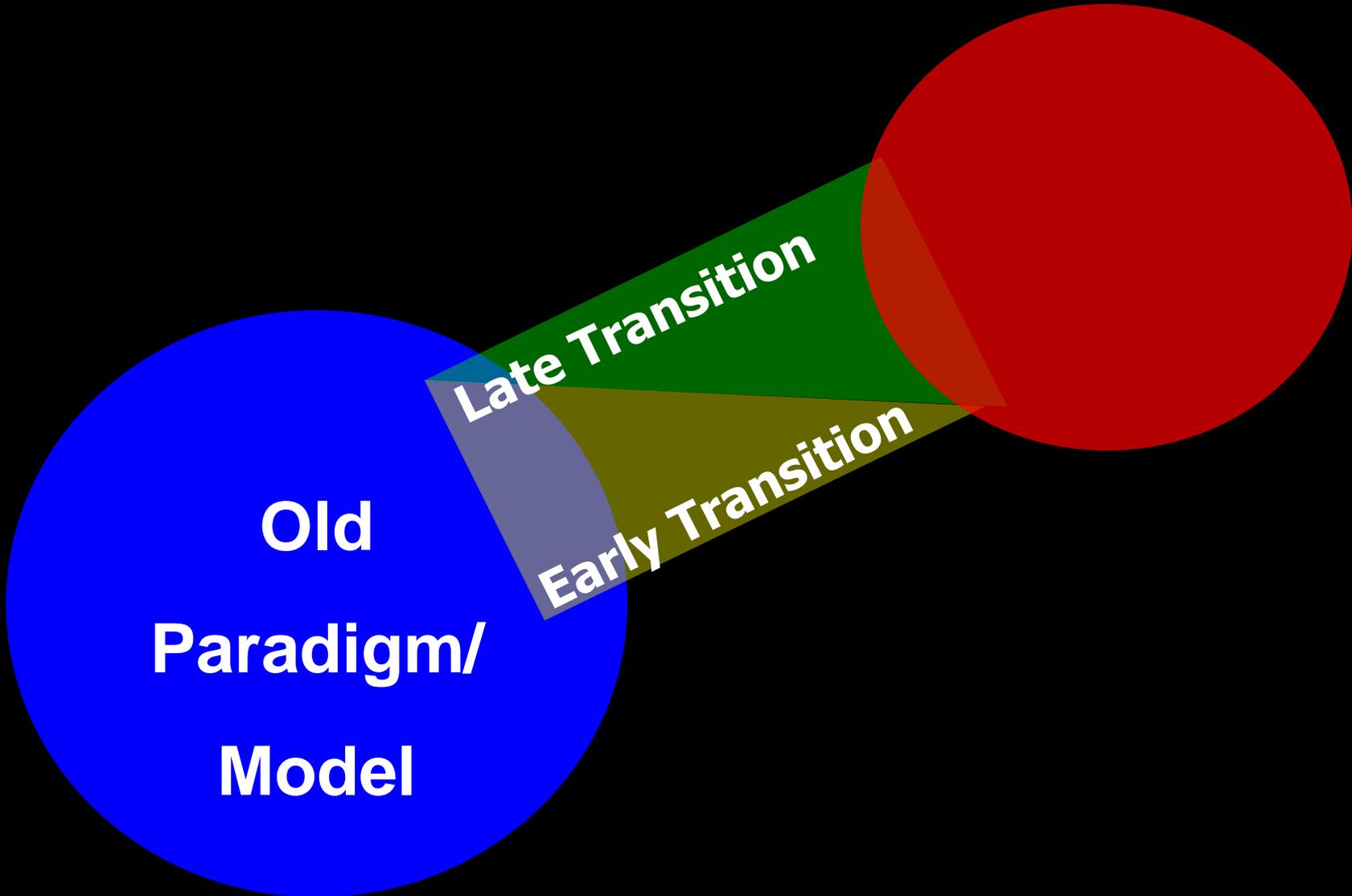
- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Conquest, Control, Progress ... | Conservation         |
| 2. Mechanistic/reductionist ...    | holistic/systemic    |
| 3. Analytical ...                  | post-analytical      |
| 4. Secular/scientific ...          | spiritual/scientific |
| 5. Objective ...                   | Intersubjective      |
| 6. Critical ...                    | Post-critical        |
| 7. Organization ...                | alliance, network    |
- 

# Themes of Postmodernity

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8. Individualism ...        | community, tradition, tribe |
| 9. Protestant/polemical ... | Post-protestant             |
| 10. Consumerism ...         | Sustainability              |
| 11. Print literacy ...      | layered fluency             |
| 12. National ...            | global/migratory            |



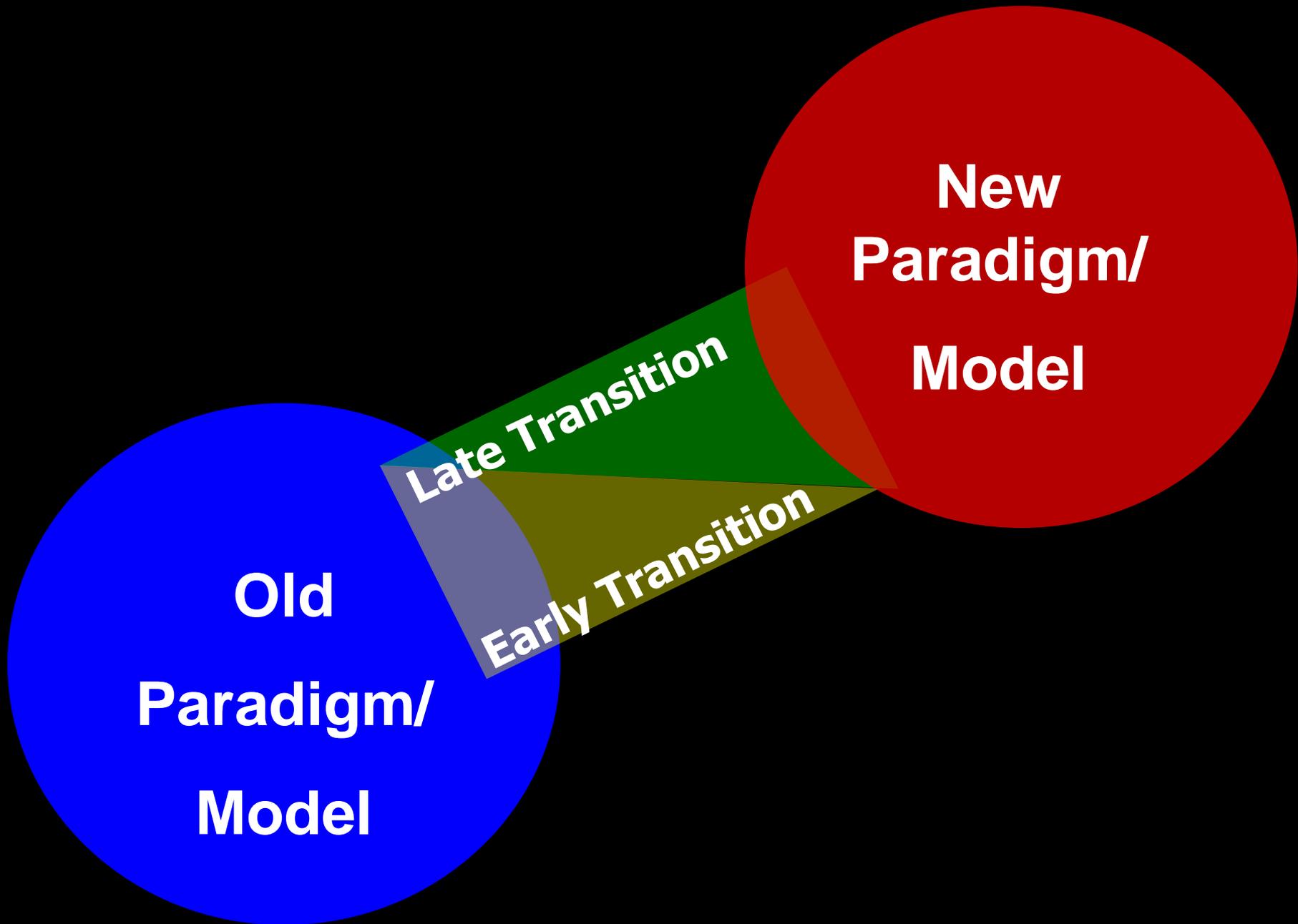


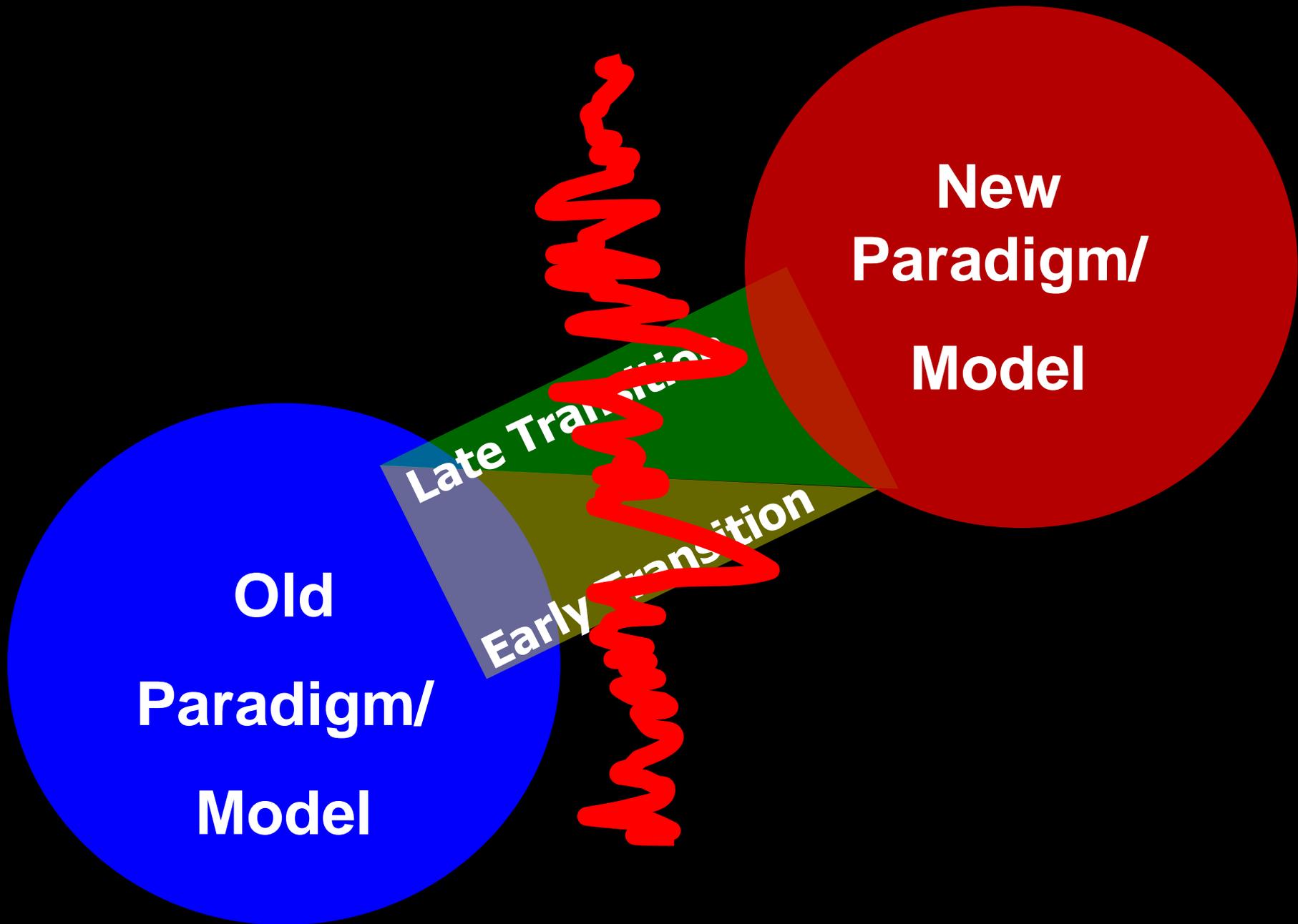


**Old  
Paradigm/  
Model**

**Late Transition**

**Early Transition**





# Paradigm Shifts

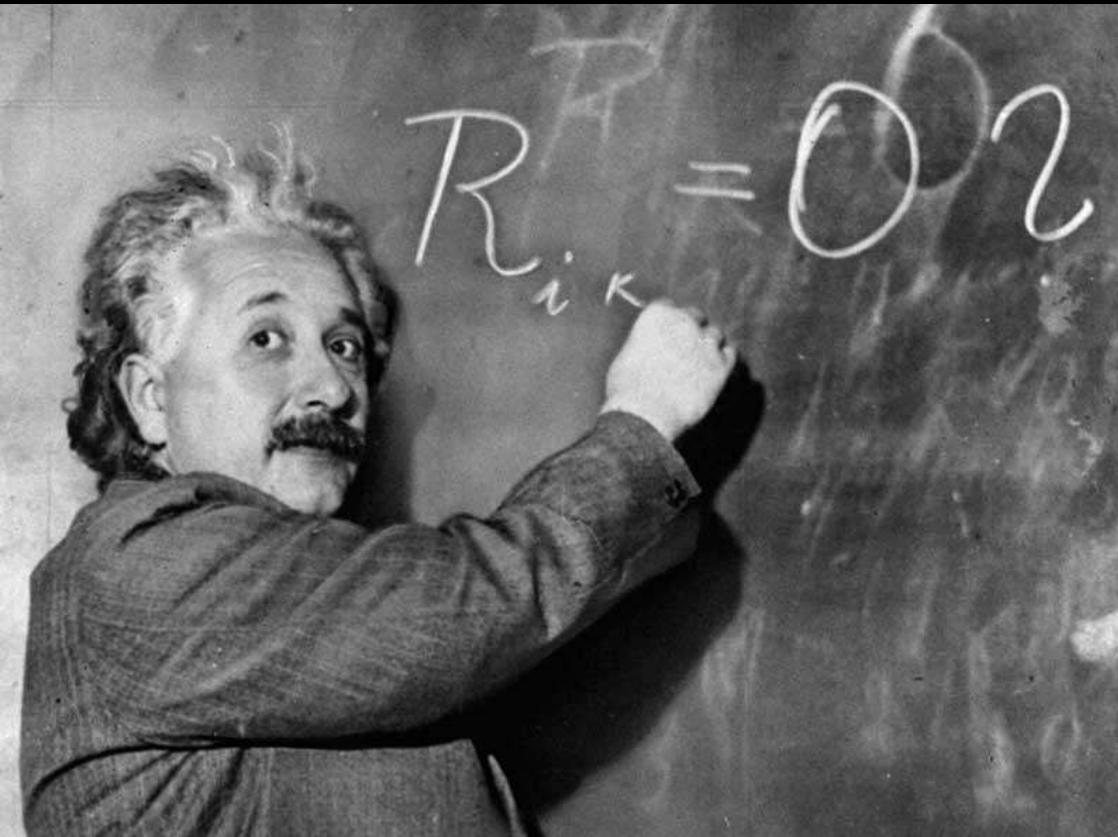
Almost always the [people] who achieve these fundamental inventions of a new paradigm have been either very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change.

Thomas S. Kuhn

*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

"I remember discussions with Bohr which went through many hours till very late at night and ended almost in despair; and when at the end of the discussion I went alone for a walk in the neighboring park I repeated to myself again and again the question: Can nature possibly be so absurd as it seemed to us in these atomic experiments?... here the foundations of physics have started moving; and ... this motion has caused the feeling that the ground would be cut from science." **Werner Heisenberg**

*“It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built.”*



**Albert Einstein**  
**On his**  
**paradigm shift**



***“A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.”***  
**Max Planck, *Scientific Autobiography***





# A Poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Upon this age that never speaks its  
mind

This furtive age, this age endowed  
with power to wake the moon with  
footsteps,

To fit an oar into the rowlocks of the  
wind and find what swims before his  
prow

And what swirls behind,

## **A Poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay**

Upon this gifted age in this dark hour  
Rains from the sky a meteoric shower  
of facts.

They lie unquestioned, uncombined.  
Wisdom enough to leach us of our ill  
is daily spun  
But there exists no loom to weave it  
into fabric.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (from "Hunstman, What Quarry?")

**So ... what's next?**

**The answer is ... not  
one response, but  
many creative and  
synergistic responses.**

**So ... what's next?**

**The answer is ...**

**What will you and I  
believe, become, and  
create?**

**APARTHEID MUSEUM**

DEMOCRACY  
RECONCILIATION

DIVERSITY

RESPONSIBILITY

RESPECT

FREEDOM



