Chapter **3** introduces us to our 5th church, Sardis, or "**Red Ones**". This nickname may owe its existence to the fact that this city was a great center for the **wool** industry and was, like Thyatira, known for its **dyes**. It might also be called the "Red Ones" due to the blood that flowed during this time (1000 AD -1600 AD. This period is known as the "**Late Dark Ages**". This is the age of the "**Spanish Inquisition**". (1478 – established by Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand I of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile.) It was also known as the "**Holy Inquisition"**. It was an attempt by various institutions within the Catholic church to stamp out any dissident voices. Branded as heretics, they were particularly concerned with the extinction of such groups as the **Cathars**, **Anabaptists**, **Albigensians**, **Lollards**, **Paulicans** and **Waldensians**.The Waldensians believed the Roman Catholic Church to be the church of Rev. 17 and that the **Pope** was the **antichrist**. The Inquisition did not officially end until 1834. "Heretics" according to the Catholic Church, but in reality, small fragmented groups of faithful believers, known by any number of names, were exterminated to the tune of anywhere between **30,000** to **300,000** souls. It was also this period of time that saw the massacre of the **Huguenots (French Protestants).** At the **St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre** in **1572** , estimates of between **5000** and **30,000** Protestants were killed at the hands of Catholic vigilantes.The blood that flowed from these Christian martyrs would have turned the ground red!

Before we look at the text, let us take a moment and grab a glimpse of what the ancient city of Sardis might have looked like. This is important because in many ways, the church reflected the city. What could be said of the city could also be said of the church. ".***...Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.***"

The city was living off the name or reputation of **past glories**. It had once been the capital of Lydia. The great king, Croesus, (reigned from 560 BC to 546 BC) a "Solomon type" figure, lived there.He was renouned for his **wealth**. It had been a rich and glorious city.It was deemed to be impregnable because it was situated upon a nearly inaccessible hill. Because of their wealth and secure setting the people became **complacent**, arrogant and **overconfident**. In spite of its "safe" location it was in fact overrun in 549 Bc and again in 218 BC.

The Pactolus River ran throufh Sardis, its waters carrying **gold dust**.

Sardis, as mentioned earlier, was the center for the **wool** trade.

Sardis also was a center for costly **dyes**.

It was a center of worship for the goddess, Cyble. Her worship services were wild, frenzied,hysterical affairs involving wild music, wine and disorderly, ecstatic conduct.

Sardis was also struck suddenly, "*as a thief in the night*", by an earthquake in **17 AD** that destroyed a considerable part of the city. In summary, by the time John writes to this church, in 90 AD, the city is but a shadow of its former self. Sadly, that is the state of the church as well. The church, like the city, had a name that lived, but it was in fact dead!

It had become an **organization** rather than a living **organism**. **Ritual**, **liturgy**, pomp and **ceremony** had taken precedence. The **form** was more important than the **substance**.It had a form of godliness without the power thereof! We see the same thing today. There are "denominations" that claim to believe the cadinal doctrines like the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, His sinless life, His death, burial, and resurrection, His assention and even His return and yet, are dead in the water!! There are **Baptist** churches that sadly fit this description! This church had works but God was not pleased with them.