

# Job 23:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

## Analysis

**For God maketh my heart soft** (וַאֲלֵהֶרַק לִבִּי, ve-El herak libbi)—The verb rakak (רָכַךְ) means "to make soft, weak, faint." Paradoxically, this softening isn't tenderness but weakness. The word is used of hearts melting in fear (Deuteronomy 20:3, Joshua 2:11). Job's heart isn't softened by grace but enervated by terror. The phrase **the Almighty troubleth me** (וַיַּחֲזִיקֵנִי אֱלֹהִים, ve-yachzikeni Elohim) uses bahal again—God causes dismay. El (אֱלֹהִים, God) and Shaddai (שַׁדַּי, Almighty) are covenant names, yet they bring no comfort.

This inverts Ezekiel 36:26's promise: "I will take away the stony heart... and give you a heart of flesh." Job's soft heart brings not responsiveness to grace but paralysis before judgment. This is law without gospel, sovereignty without love. Only Christ resolves this: His hard sayings (John 6:60) drive away superficial followers but melt hard hearts through the Spirit (Acts 2:37, "pricked in their heart").

## Historical Context

Ancient Israelite anthropology located emotions and will in the heart (lev). A soft heart could mean teachable (2 Chronicles 34:27) or fearful. Job experiences the latter—covenant names (El, Shaddai) providing no assurance. This reflects the insufficiency of old covenant mediation without the perfect High Priest (Hebrews 7:25).

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does the gospel enable God's name "Almighty" to comfort rather than terrify?
2. What is the relationship between a soft heart and spiritual vitality?
3. How does Job's experience prepare us to value Christ's mediation?

## Interlinear Text

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לֵאל	יֵהָרֵךְ	לִבִּי	וְיֵשִׁיב	הַבְּהִילָנִי:
For God	soft	maketh my heart	and the Almighty	troubleth
H410	H7401	H3820	H7706	H926

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 22:14** (Parallel theme): I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

**Job 27:2** (References God): As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;

**Deuteronomy 20:3** (Parallel theme): And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;