

Berean Dashboard

THE COMPLETE MANUAL

*“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica,
for they received the word with great eagerness,
examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”*

ACTS 17:11

Version 12 · July 2026

berean-dashboard.pages.dev

Ed Smith · Smith For Christ

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1 What the Berean Dashboard is

The Berean Dashboard is a free Bible study workbench that runs in a web browser. It puts up to three English translations and the Hebrew or Greek original side by side, lets you mark the text in color, gives you a notebook organised the way inductive study actually works, and reads any of it aloud in your device's own voice. It is at **berean-dashboard.pages.dev**. There is nothing to install, nothing to buy, and no account to create.

That is the short version. The longer version is that most Bible websites are reference tools. You go there, you look something up, you leave. Blue Letter Bible is superb at that and I use it. But looking things up is not studying. Studying is what happens when you sit with a passage, notice what it repeats, ask what it meant to the people who first heard it, and then write down what has to change in you. That work needs a workbench, not a lookup counter.

So the positioning is simple, and I say it the same way every time: **Blue Letter Bible is where you look things up. Berean is where you do the work.** Every decision in this app follows from that sentence.

The one-paragraph version, if someone asks you what it does

The Berean Dashboard is a free, install-nothing Bible study workbench that puts up to three translations beside the Hebrew or Greek, turns every verse number and every original-language word into a doorway to a dictionary and a commentary, lets you mark the text in colors that mean whatever you decide they mean, and gives you an Observation-Interpretation-Application notebook that saves itself as you type, listens when you would rather talk, and reads your own notes back to you when reading them is the hard part.

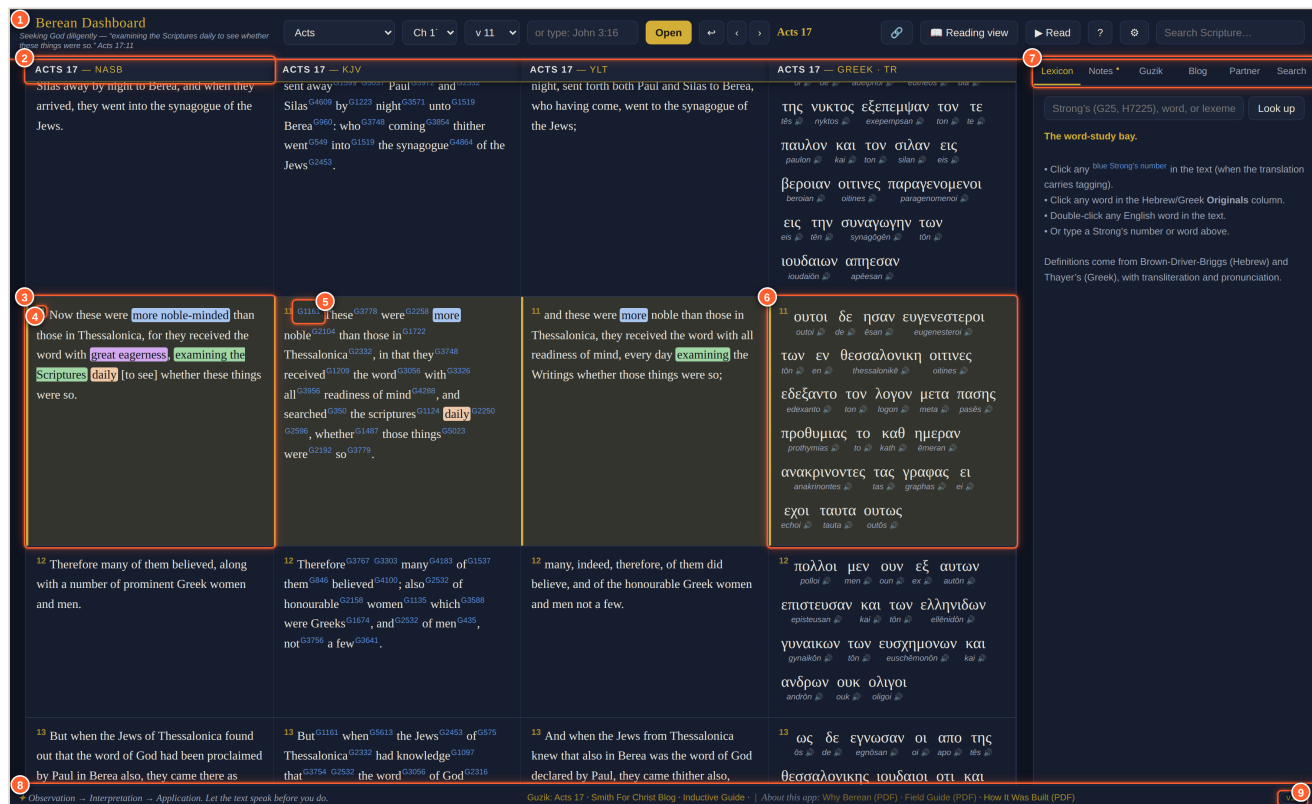


Figure 1. The whole study view at a glance. Acts 17 in NASB, KJV and YLT, with the Greek Textus Receptus in the fourth column, verse 11 focused and marked, and the side panel open. The numbered keys are explained in section 4.

Nine things are worth naming on that first screen, and each of them gets its own section later:

1	The top bar	Everything to do with getting to a passage and doing something with the whole chapter.
2	A column head	Which translation this column is showing. You choose the columns yourself.
3	The focused verse	The verse everything else keys off: the commentary, the listening, the marking.
4	A verse number	Not decoration. Click it to focus that verse and open the Deeper tab at the same verse.
5	A Strong's number	Where the translation carries tagging. Click it for the dictionary entry.
6	The Originals column	Hebrew or Greek, with transliteration under each word and a speaker to hear it.
7	The side panel tabs	Lexicon, Notes, Deeper, Blog, Partner, Search. A dot on Notes means this chapter has some.
8	The footer	The method, in one line, plus links to the sources and the three companion PDFs.
9	The version chip	Tap it for the About panel: which version you are on, what changed, and an update button.

2 Why I built it

I built this for my youngest brother, Tim.

Tim is dyslexic. He wants to study the Bible the way I do, and the two things that stand between him and that are not spiritual and are not intellectual. They are mechanical. **Typing a question is hard. Reading a paragraph back is hard.** Every Bible study tool I could find assumed both of those were free.

So the microphone is not a novelty feature bolted on late. It is load-bearing. You can dictate your notes instead of typing them. You can ask the Study Partner a question out loud. You can turn on conversation mode and never touch the keyboard at all. And you can have the app read your own notes back to you, which turns out to be the half nobody builds — everyone will read you the Bible, nobody will read you your own notebook.

I keep one rule above the others when I decide what to build next: *that fact outranks every feature idea*. If a shiny new capability makes the app harder to use by voice, it does not go in.

The three things this app refuses to do

It will not think for you. The Study Partner answers like a good teacher — usually with a question back at you. Scripture stays the authority; the app is a study partner, not an oracle.

It will not hold your notes hostage. Your work lives on your device, and you can pull all of it out as Markdown, Word, or a printed sheet at any time.

It will not charge you. Not now, not later. It costs me a few dollars a month to run and that is where it stays.

The second reason is method. Inductive study has three movements — Observation, Interpretation, Application — and the discipline is in doing them in order and not skipping the first one. Most note-taking tools give you a blank box. A blank box quietly invites you to jump straight to what it means to me. This app gives you three boxes in order, with the questions for each one sitting right there when you want them, so the method is built into the furniture rather than into your willpower.

The third reason is ownership. There is no account, no server copy of your work, and no analytics watching you study. That is a design decision with a real trade-off, and I explain the trade-off honestly in section 11 rather than hiding it.

The footer of the app carries the whole thesis in ten words: **Observation to Interpretation to Application. Let the text speak before you do.**

3 Your first five minutes

Open **berean-dashboard.pages.dev** in any modern browser. On a phone or tablet you can add it to your home screen and it will run like an app. I use Chrome on an iPad; if you want the home-screen install specifically on an iPhone or iPad, that still has to be done from Safari, because Apple only allows it there.

The first time you arrive you get the welcome card. It is the same card the ? button brings back at any time, so you do not have to memorise it now.

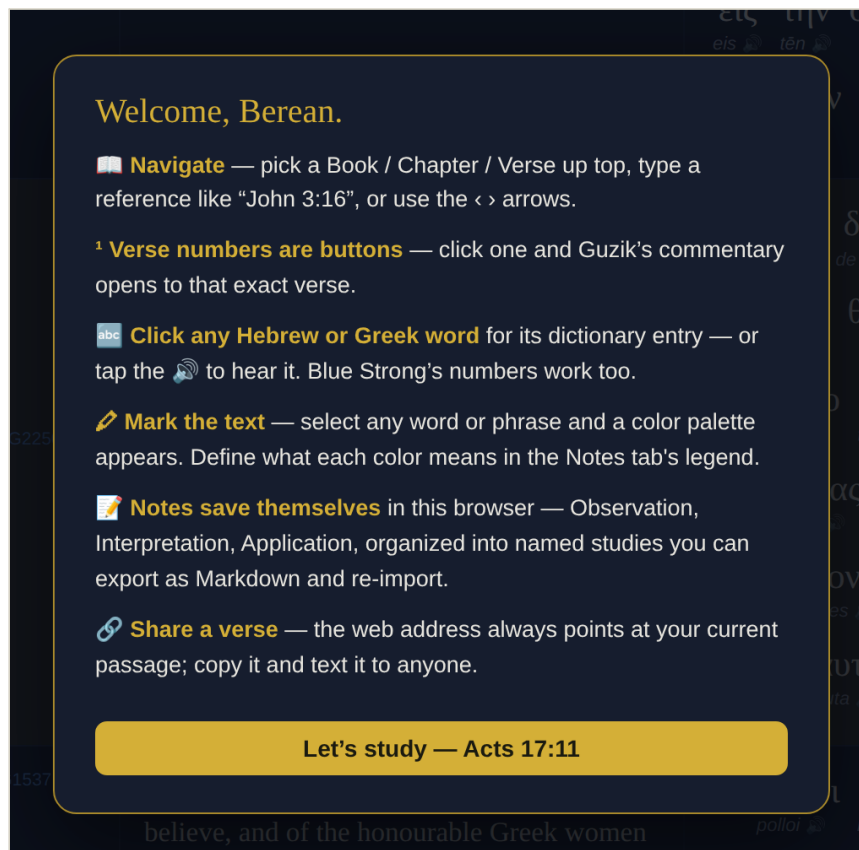


Figure 2. The welcome card. Press ? in the top bar to see it again whenever you want. The gold button is the only way to dismiss it.

Here is what I would actually do in the first five minutes.

Land somewhere real	Type a reference into the box that says <i>or type: John 3:16</i> and press Enter, or pick a book and chapter from the dropdowns. The app opens on Acts 17:11 for a reason.
Click a verse number	Any verse number in any column. It becomes the focused verse everywhere, and the Deeper tab opens on a commentary at that verse. This is the fastest way to understand that the numbers are buttons.
Click a Greek word	In the Originals column. The Lexicon tab fills in with the dictionary entry, the transliteration and a speaker button.
Mark something	Select a word or phrase with your mouse or finger. A color palette appears. Pick a color.

Write one line	Open the Notes tab and type one observation. Watch Saved appear. You now have a study.
Then export it	Press .md in the Notes tab. That file is your backup and your way onto another device. Do this once early so you know it works.

The single most important habit

Your notes live in this browser on this device and nowhere else. That is deliberate, and section 11 explains why. But it means the **.md** export button is your safety net. Press it at the end of a study session the way you would save a document. It is also the format to bring back in: **Import** takes the **.md** file whole, study and marks and legend together.

4 The screen, part by part

The window has four bands: the top bar, an optional settings row, the reading area with its columns and side panel, and the footer. This section walks every control in each one. The numbers in the tables match the orange numbers on the figures.

4.1 The top bar

The top bar is split across two figures here only so the numbers stay readable on the page. On screen it is one continuous row.



Figure 3. The left half of the top bar: navigation.

1	Book	Every book of the Bible in canonical order. Changing it resets to chapter 1.
2	Chapter	Chapters in the current book.
3	Verse	Jumps to a verse and focuses it. Focusing is what drives the commentary, the listening and the marking.
4	Reference box	Type <i>John 3:16</i> , <i>Acts 17</i> , <i>1 Cor 13:4</i> and press Enter. It understands ordinary human references.
5	Open	Does the same thing as pressing Enter in the reference box.
6	Back arrow	Returns you to where you were before the last jump. Useful when you follow a cross-reference and want to come home.
7	Previous chapter	One chapter back. It will cross a book boundary.
8	Next chapter	One chapter forward.
9	Chapter title	Where you are. Not a control — it is the app telling you it heard you.

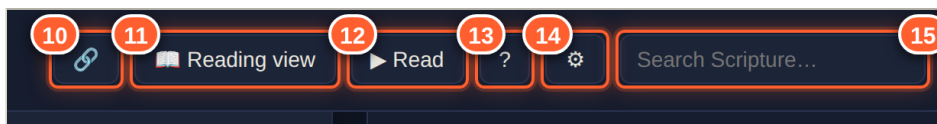


Figure 4. The right half of the top bar: what you can do with the whole chapter.

10	Share link	Copies a web address that points at exactly the verse you are on. On a phone it opens the normal share sheet. Paste it into a text message and the person who taps it lands where you are.
11	Reading view	One clean version, top to bottom, no columns. See section 7.6.

12	► Listen	Reads the chapter aloud in English from the focused verse, using your device's own voice. It says ■ Stop while it is speaking. See section 7.3. Figure 4 was captured before this button was renamed and still shows the old wording; see section 14.
13	Help	Brings back the welcome card from figure 2.
14	Settings	Shows and hides the settings row described next.
15	Search Scripture	Type a phrase, press Enter, and the Search tab fills with every place it occurs.

4.2 The settings row

The gear button in the top bar opens a second row. It stays open until you press the gear again, and everything you choose here is remembered.

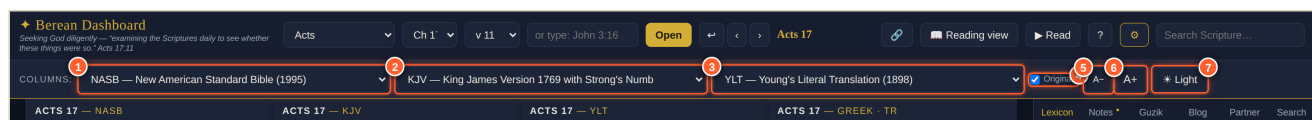


Figure 5. The settings row, sitting under the top bar.

1	Column 1	Which translation shows in the first column.
2	Column 2	The second column.
3	Column 3	The third column. Optional — leave it blank for a two-column view with more room per verse.
4	Originals	Shows or hides the Hebrew or Greek column. Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek in the New; the app switches automatically.
5	A minus	Smaller text, in steps.
6	A plus	Larger text. This scales the whole reading area, not just one column.
7	Light / Dark	Switches the theme. The button tells you where it will take you, not where you are.

The translation list is long — it comes from the same source that supplies the text — and some translations carry Strong's tagging while others do not. The KJV in the middle column of figure 1 is tagged: those small blue numbers beside the words are Strong's numbers, and they are clickable. An untagged translation simply will not show them. That is a property of the translation, not a fault in the app.

Figure 6. The same chapter in the light theme. Marks, Strong's numbers and the focused verse all carry over — only the paper changes.

Each column is one translation, laid out verse by verse so the same verse number sits at the same height across all of them. That alignment is the whole point: it is what lets you see, in one glance, that where the NASB says *more noble-minded* the YLT says *more noble* and the Greek says *eugenesteroi*.

The Originals column behaves differently from the English ones. Each word is shown in Hebrew or Greek with its transliteration underneath in smaller type, and a small speaker beside the transliteration that pronounces it. The word itself is clickable and sends its entry to the Lexicon tab.

This is a parallel view, not a true interlinear. The Greek and English columns line up verse by verse, not word by word, because the data source gives me tagged verses rather than a word-aligned text. A real interlinear is on the roadmap in section 13, and it is a data problem rather than a code problem.

4.4 The side panel and its six tabs

Everything that is not the Bible text lives in the panel on the right. There are six tabs. Which one you have open is not remembered between visits — every fresh load of the app starts on Lexicon.

Lexicon	The word-study bay. Dictionary entries, transliteration, pronunciation. Section 9.
Notes	Your notebook. This is the biggest part of the app and it gets all of section 6. A gold dot appears on this tab when the open chapter already has notes in it.
Deeper	Four verse-by-verse commentaries on the open chapter — Guzik, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Gill and Matthew Henry. This tab was called <i>Guzik</i> until this version. Section 9.
Blog	My own Smith For Christ posts that touch the chapter you have open. Section 9.
Partner	The Study Partner. Section 8.
Search	Full-text search across a translation. Section 9.

4.5 The footer

The footer carries three things. On the left, the method in one line: *Observation to Interpretation to Application. Let the text speak before you do.* In the middle, links to Guzik, to the Smith For Christ blog, to the inductive guide, and to the three companion PDFs — *Why Berean*, the *Field Guide*, and *How It Was Built*. On the right, the version chip. Tap the chip for the About panel described in section 10.

5 Working with the text

5.1 Verse numbers are buttons

This is the single feature people miss for the longest time, so I will say it plainly. Every verse number in every English column is a button. Click one and that verse becomes the focused verse across all columns — the commentary, the listening and the copy-to-notes chip all key off it. It also opens the Deeper tab at that verse, and the tooltip on the number tells you in advance exactly which commentary it will open — *Open Guzik at verse 11*, or whichever one you already had showing. If a commentary is open, that is the one it stays with and scrolls. If none is open, it opens Guzik. Either way you get commentary on the verse you just clicked, in one click, without going to the panel first.

In earlier versions this did nothing unless you had already opened the commentary tab yourself, and the tooltip promised more than the button delivered. That is fixed. If you learned the old behaviour, unlearn it — the numbers now do what they always looked like they did.

5.2 Word study: three ways in

There are three doors into the dictionary, and they all open onto the Lexicon tab.

A Strong's number	The small blue numbers beside words in a tagged translation. Click one.
An original word	Any Hebrew or Greek word in the Originals column. Click the word itself. The small speaker beside it pronounces it instead.
Any English word	Double-click it. The app looks for the underlying entry.

You can also simply type into the Lexicon's own box: a Strong's number like **G25** or **H7225**, or a word, or a lexeme.

5.3 Marking the text

Select any word or phrase in the scripture text — drag with a mouse, or press and drag with a finger — and a small palette appears right at the selection.

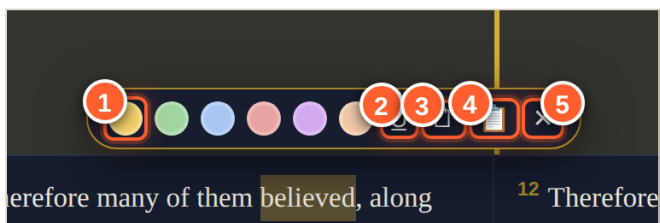


Figure 7. The marking palette, close up. It appears wherever you make a selection.

1	The six colors	Gold, green, sky, rose, violet, amber. Every new study starts with a suggested meaning for each one, and you can rewrite all six. The legend is described in section 6.6.
2	Underline	Underlines the selection instead of filling it. Useful as a second layer on top of a color.
3	To Observation	Drops the selected phrase straight into your Observation notes for this chapter.
4	Whole verse to notes	Copies the entire verse plus everything you have marked in it into your notes, along with the key questions for the step you are on.
5	Clear	Removes marks from the selection.

Marks belong to the study you are in, not to the app as a whole. Two studies of the same chapter can carry completely different markings, which is exactly what you want when you come back to a passage a year later and do not want your old conclusions shouting at you.

The screenshot shows the Berean Dashboard app interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Berean Dashboard', 'Acts', 'Ch 17', 'v 11', and a search bar. Below this, the main content area displays the text of Acts 17:12 in four columns: NASB, KJV, YLT, and Greek. A palette of six colors (1-5) is overlaid on the text, with the colors corresponding to the 'The six colors' section. The palette is positioned over the text, and the marks from an earlier pass on verse 11 are still visible above the current selection. On the right side, there's a sidebar with 'Notes', 'Guzik', 'Blog', and 'Partner' tabs. The 'Notes' tab is active, showing a list of notes for Acts 17, including 'Paul's custom', 'first', 'three Sabbaths running', 'Repeated word: reasoned / examined / searched', 'Contrast: Thessalonica riots (v5), Berea examines (v11)', 'more noble-minded (v11) — Luke's own verdict on the Bereans', and 'Terms of conclusion: therefore (v30), so (v33)'. At the bottom, there's a footer with 'Guzik: Acts 17 · Smith For Christ Blog · Inductive Guide · About this app: Why Berean (PDF) · Field Guide (PDF) · How It Was Built (PDF)'.

Figure 8. The palette in place over a live selection in Acts 17:12, with the marks from an earlier pass on verse 11 still showing above it.

5.4 Marking on a touch screen

Dragging to select text is fiddly on a phone, and it is worse if your hands are not steady. So on any touch device a pencil button appears in the bottom-left corner. Tap it to turn on tap-to-mark mode, then simply tap a word to mark it. Tap the pencil again to go back to normal. The button is not there on a desktop with a mouse, because it is not needed there.

The screenshot displays the Berean Dashboard app on a tablet. The top navigation bar includes the app name, current chapter (Acts), verse (11), and a search bar. Below this, a grid of four columns shows Bible verses in different translations: NASB, KJV, YLT, and Greek. The text is color-coded to highlight specific words and phrases. A pencil icon in the bottom-left corner indicates that the app is in 'tap-to-mark' mode. The right sidebar features a 'Lexicon' section with a search bar and a 'Look up' button. The bottom of the screen has a navigation bar with links to Observation, Interpretation, Application, and other resources.

Figure 9. The same app on a tablet-sized screen. The pencil at bottom left is tap-to-mark mode; it only appears on touch devices.

6 Notes: the deep dive

This is the part of the app I care most about, so it gets the most pages. Everything here is in the **Notes** tab.

6.1 Studies, and why there is more than one

A *study* is a named container: its own notes, its own marks, its own color legend. You might have one called *Acts* — *the noble-minded* and another called *Romans* — *the righteousness of God*, and a third that is just this autumn's small group. They can all contain notes on the same chapter without colliding.

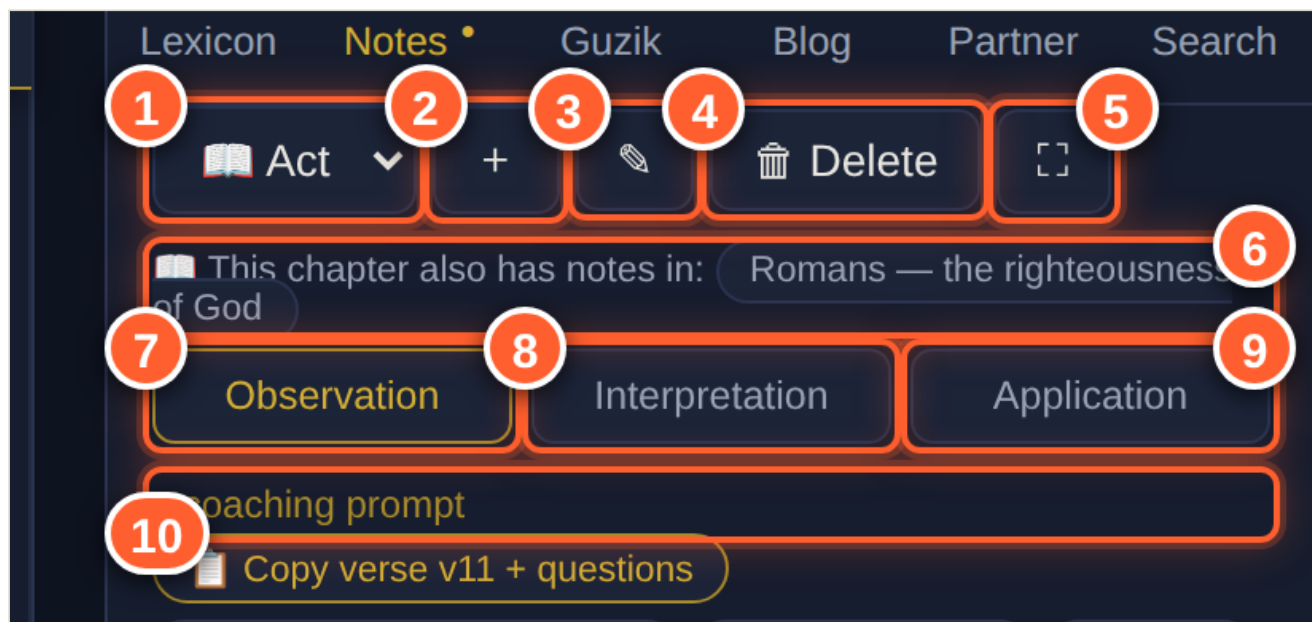


Figure 10. The top of the Notes tab: which study you are in, and which of the three movements you are working in.

1	Study picker	Switch between your studies. Switching reloads the notes and the marks together.
2	New study	Creates one and asks you to name it.
3	Rename	Renames the current study.
4	Delete	Deletes the entire study — every chapter of notes and every mark in it. This one cannot be undone, so it is the only button here I would think twice about.
5	Full screen	Expands the notebook across the whole window. Esc brings you back.
6	Other studies	When another study also has notes on this chapter, it says so here and offers you a chip to jump straight to it.
7	Observation	What does the text say?
8	Interpretation	What does it mean?

9	Application	What must change?
10	Coaching prompt	A collapsed line that opens into the questions for whichever movement you are in.

6.2 Observation, Interpretation, Application

The three tabs are not folders. They are an order of operations. The app will not stop you jumping to Application first, but it will keep quietly putting Observation on the left, and after a while that does its work on you.

Open the *coaching prompt* line and you get the questions for the movement you are in, in the app's own words:

Observation	What does the text say? Who, what, when, where? Repeated words, contrasts, comparisons, commands, cause and effect, terms of conclusion — <i>therefore, so that</i> .
Interpretation	What does it mean? Context first: what did it mean to the original audience? Compare Scripture with Scripture. Check key words in the original language.
Application	What must change? Is there a promise to trust, a sin to confess, a command to obey, an example to follow? Be specific and personal.

Underneath the prompt is a row of chips. Tapping one drops a heading into your notes so you do not have to type it. In Observation they are the observation moves — *Who / What / When / Where, Repeated words, Contrast, Comparison, Commands, Cause to Effect, List*. In Interpretation they are *Context, Word study, Cross-references, Author's intent, What it meant to them*. In Application they are *Promise to trust, Sin to confess, Command to obey, Example to follow, Prayer*. Every one of the three also ends with + **verse**. Be clear about what that one does: it drops in a labelled stub, **v11** —, and leaves the writing to you. It does not paste the verse text.

The chip that *does* paste the text is the gold one at the front of the row, reading **Copy verse v11 + questions** with your focused verse number in it. That one puts the whole verse into your notes together with the inductive questions for the box you are in, which is usually what people are reaching for when they press + **verse** and wonder why nothing arrived.

6.3 The editor and its toolbar

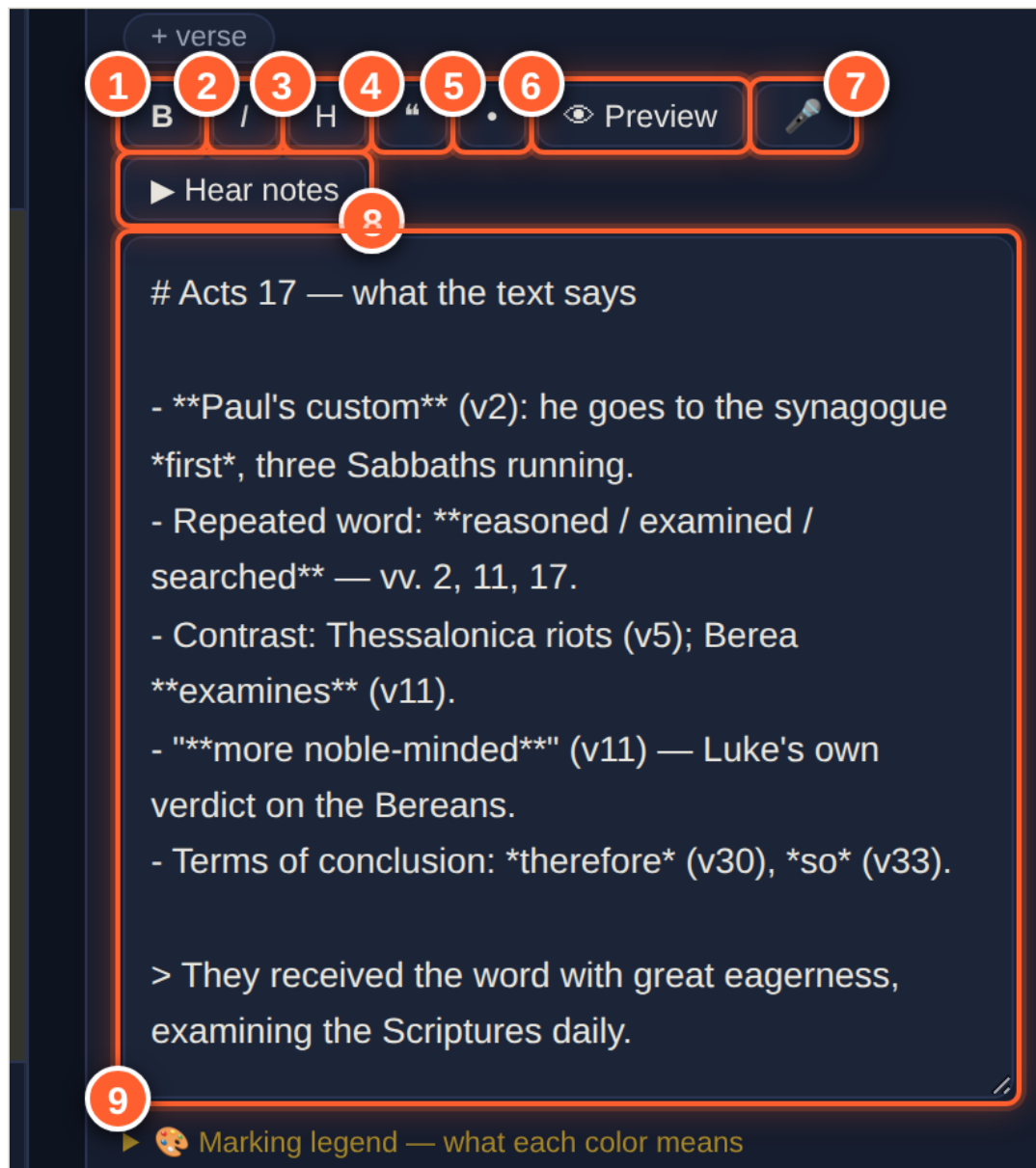


Figure 11. The note editor and its toolbar. This is where most of the work happens.

1	Bold	Wraps the selection in bold.
2	Italic	Wraps the selection in italics.
3	Heading	Makes the current line a heading.
4	Quote	Makes the current line a quotation — what I use for the verse itself.
5	List	Makes the current line a bullet.
6	Preview	Toggles the formatted view described next.

7	Dictate	Talk instead of type. Section 7.1.
8	Hear notes	Reads your own notes back to you. Section 7.2.
9	The notebook	Plain text, saving itself constantly. The word Saved flicks on above it every time it does.

6.4 Preview, and what the formatting marks do

The notebook is plain Markdown. You do not have to know what that means — the toolbar buttons write it for you — but it is worth knowing that the symbols you see while typing are not clutter. Two stars around a word makes it bold. A hash at the start of a line makes it a heading. A greater-than sign makes it a quotation. A dash makes a bullet. Press **Preview** and the editor splits: your typing above, the formatted result below.

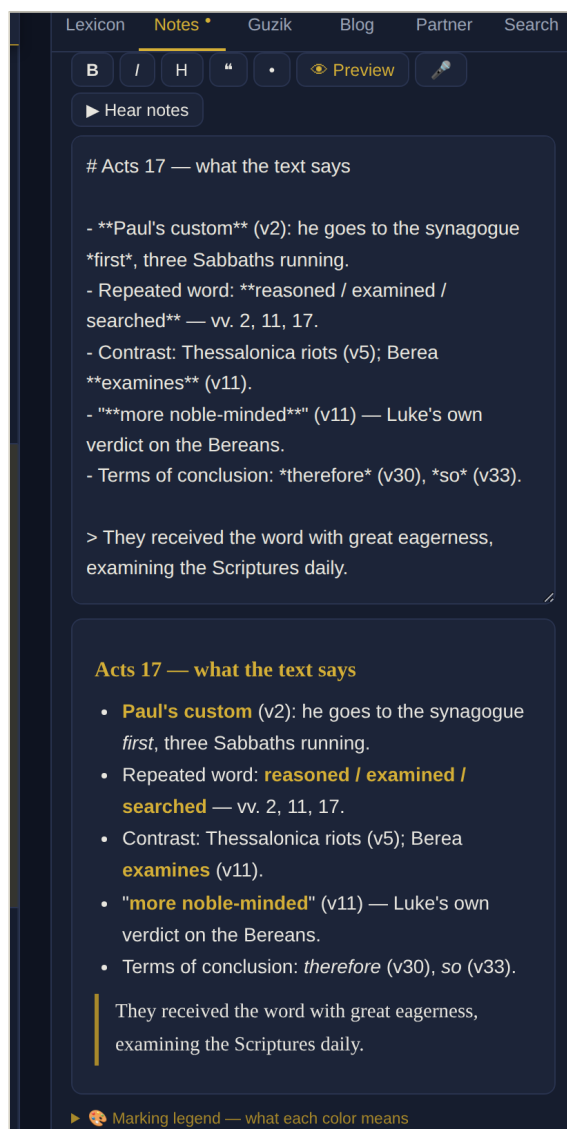


Figure 12. Preview on. The raw notes above, the formatted version below. The exports are built from this same text, with a title, the chapter headings and a list of your marks added around it.

I keep Preview off while I am writing and turn it on before I export. The reason to care is that Markdown is what makes the export honest: the file you get out is the same text you typed, readable in any editor on earth, and re-importable here.

6.5 Full-screen notes

The expand button in the study row throws the notebook across the entire window with the editor and the preview side by side. This is the mode for the moment when you have stopped looking things up and started writing. **Esc** returns you to the study view.

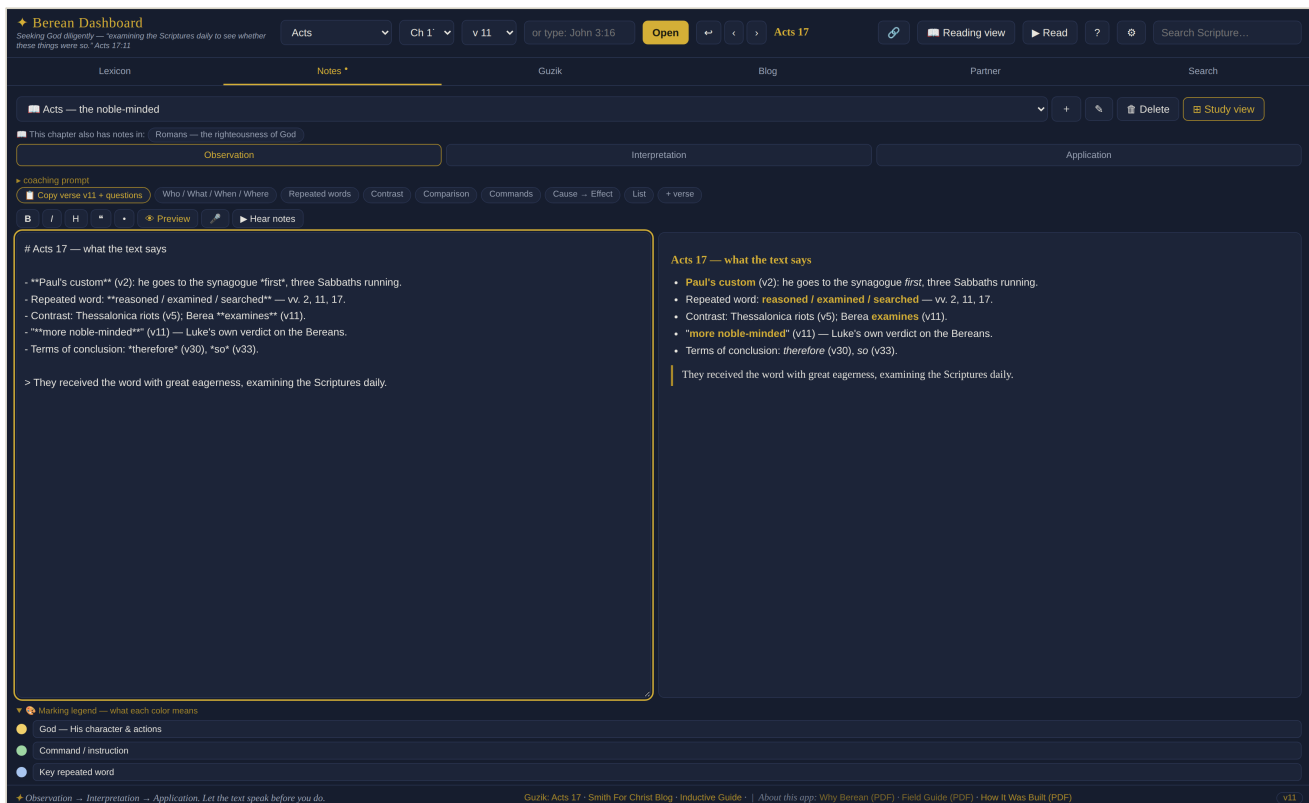


Figure 13. Full-screen notes. Editor on the left, formatted preview on the right, the whole width of the window.

6.6 The marking legend

A color only means what the legend says it means. Under the notebook, open *Marking legend* and you get a line for each of the six. Every new study starts with the set I use — gold is *God — His character and actions*, green is *command or instruction*, sky is *key repeated word*, rose is *sin or warning*, violet is *promise or blessing* and amber is *time, place or contrast*. That is a starting point and nothing more. Type over any of them. Each study carries its own set, so a study of Romans can use the six colors for six entirely different things than a study of Acts.

6.7 The note manager

Open *Note manager* and you get every chapter you have notes on, across every study, with a count of which of the three movements you have filled in and how many marks are in it. Click a reference to jump there. The small bin on a row deletes just that chapter's notes and marks within that study, which is a far gentler thing than the Delete button at the top.

6.8 Keyword marking

Below the manager is a box that reads *Key words to mark*. Type words separated by commas — *love, believe, therefore* — and press **Mark**, and every occurrence in the open chapter is highlighted at once. Six terms is the limit; type a seventh and it is quietly ignored. **Clear** removes them. This is the fastest way to do the classic observation exercise of finding a repeated word, and it is the one I reach for first in a new chapter.

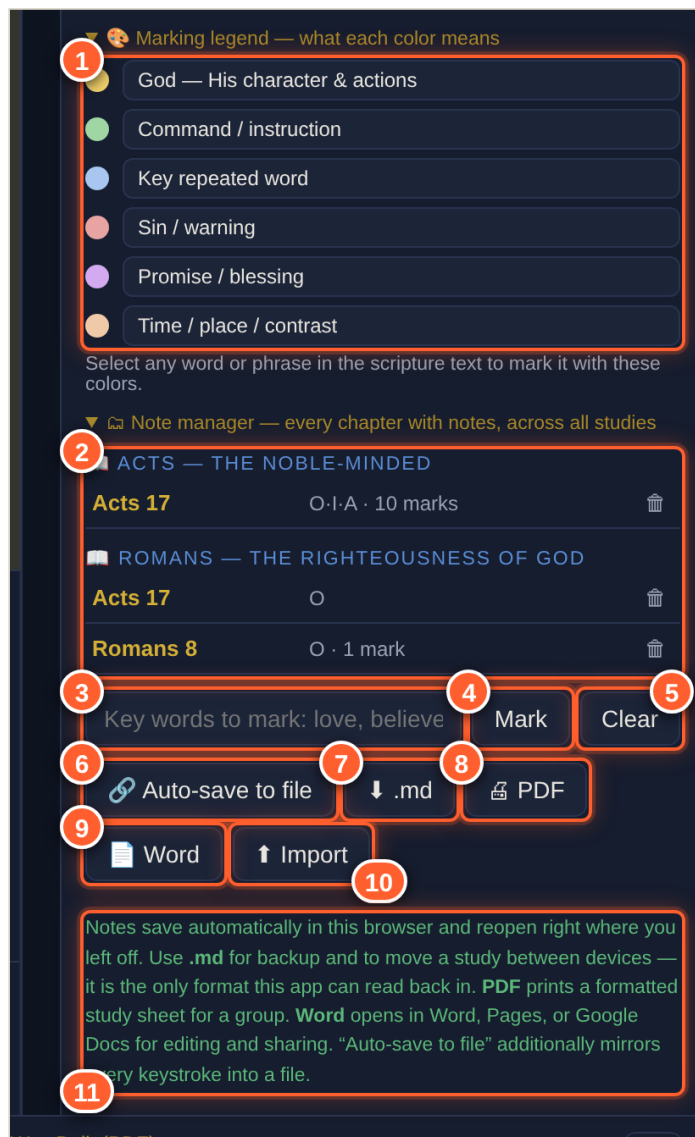


Figure 14. Everything below the notebook: the legend, the note manager, keyword marking, and the export row.

1	Legend rows	One line per color. Write what each one means to you, in this study.
2	Note manager	Every chapter with notes, in every study, with a jump link and a per-chapter delete.
3	Key words box	Comma-separated words to highlight throughout the chapter.
4	Mark	Applies them.
5	Clear	Removes them.
6	Auto-save to file	Mirrors every keystroke into a file on your own disk. Section 6.9.
7	Markdown export	The archival format, and the one to bring back in. Section 6.9.
8	PDF	Opens your system print dialog, formatted as a group handout. Choose Save as PDF there.
9	Word	A Word document. It also opens in Pages and in Google Docs.
10	Import	Reads a Markdown file this app exported and brings the whole study back.
11	The reminder	A standing note about where your work lives and what each button is for.

6.9 Getting your notes out, and back in

Four ways out, one way in. Understanding the difference matters more than any other housekeeping detail in this app.

Markdown (.md)	The one that matters. A plain text file containing your notes exactly as you wrote them, plus a hidden block at the bottom that carries your marks and legend. This is the format to keep, the format to back up, and the format that comes back whole — notes, marks and legend together. The Import button will also accept a plain .json file of notes and merge it into the study you are in, but that path carries no marks and no legend, so treat .md as the real one.
PDF	Opens your browser's print dialog with the study laid out as a handout. Choose <i>Save as PDF</i> in that dialog if you want a file rather than paper. Good for a group. Not a backup — it cannot come back in.
Word	A .doc file that opens in Word, Pages and Google Docs. This is what I send when someone wants to edit or comment. Also not a backup.
Auto-save to file	Available in browsers that support it, chiefly desktop Chrome and Edge. You choose a file once, and from then on every keystroke is mirrored into it. When it is on, the status line tells you the filename and the time of the last save. Point it at a new file rather than an existing study file: it writes, it does not read, so choosing a file you have already exported to will overwrite it rather than pick up where it left off.
Import	Reads a Markdown file this app exported. If a study of that name already exists it asks whether to replace it, and if you say no it brings the file in under a new name rather than losing either copy.

How to move a study to another device

1. On the first device, open the study and press **.md**. You get a file.
2. Get that file to the other device however you normally move files — email it to yourself, drop it in iCloud or Drive, AirDrop it.
3. On the second device, open the Berean Dashboard, go to the Notes tab, press **Import**, and choose the file. Notes, marks and legend all come across.

There is no sync, and there is not going to be one without a server, which would mean holding your notes. The export is deliberately the whole story.

7 Voice: the deep dive

There are nine separate voice features now, and they do genuinely different jobs. People conflate them, so here they are laid out plainly before the detail. Two of them — hearing a whole chapter in Hebrew or Greek, and the three controls that govern how the original languages are spoken — are new in this version.

Hear a word	A single Hebrew or Greek word pronounced for you. The speaker button in the Lexicon tab and in the Originals column.
Dictate notes	Your voice becomes text in your notebook. The microphone in the note toolbar.
Hear notes	Your notebook is read back to you. Hear notes in the note toolbar.
► Listen	The Bible chapter is read to you in English from the focused verse. ► Listen in the top bar. This button was called Read before this version.
► Hebrew / ► Greek	The chapter read to you in the original language, word by word. The button in the head of the Originals column, and a small ► on every verse in that column. New in this version. Section 7.4.
Speed, pause, native voice	Three controls at the top of the Lexicon tab that govern how the original languages are spoken. New in this version. Section 7.5.
Reading view	Not speech at all — a clean single-column page built for a reading tool like Speechify to point at.
Ask out loud	Your voice becomes a question for the Study Partner, and it sends itself. The microphone in the Partner tab.
Conversation	All of the above in a loop, hands-free. The checkbox in the Partner tab.

7.1 Dictating your notes

Press the microphone in the note toolbar. It turns into a stop square, the word *listening* appears beside it, and what you say goes into the notebook at the cursor. It is continuous: you can pause to think without it giving up on you. What it has heard but not yet committed shows in quotation marks beside the button, so you can see it is following you.

Press the button again to stop, or press **Esc**. That escape key is deliberately greedy — if you are dictating in full-screen notes, the first **Esc** stops the microphone and only a second one leaves full screen, because stopping the microphone is almost always what you actually meant.

Two housekeeping behaviours are worth knowing. Only one thing owns the microphone at a time, so starting dictation stops the Study Partner listening, and vice versa. And because browsers end long listening sessions on their own schedule, the app quietly restarts the session behind the scenes while the button is still lit. You should never notice this happening; if you do, it is a bug and I want to hear about it.

7.2 Hearing your notes read back

This is the half nobody builds, and for Tim it is the important one. Press **Hear notes** and the app reads your own notebook aloud, starting from the paragraph your cursor is in rather than always from the top. The formatting marks are stripped out, so you hear your words and not a recitation of hash signs and asterisks.

The same button pauses and resumes. The stop square beside it stops altogether. If the notebook is empty it tells you so instead of sitting silently. And if you were dictating, starting playback stops the microphone first, because reading your notes aloud into a live microphone is a comedy nobody needs.

7.3 Listening to the chapter

The ► **Listen** button in the top bar reads the Bible chapter aloud in English, using your device's own built-in voice, which is why it is free and why it works offline once the chapter is loaded. It starts at the focused verse rather than at verse 1, so you can listen from where you are actually working. It reads slightly under normal speed. As it goes it scrolls each verse into view, so you can follow along with your eyes if that helps. Verse numbers and Strong's numbers are stripped out of what it says. The button reads ■ **Stop** while it is speaking; press it to stop.

This button was labelled simply **Read** until this version. It was renamed because the Originals column now has a reading button of its own, and two controls both saying *Read* would have been a puzzle rather than a label.

7.4 Hearing the Hebrew and the Greek

This is the largest addition in this version. The Originals column no longer just pronounces one word at a time — it will read the whole chapter to you in Hebrew or in Greek.

There are two ways in, and they sit exactly where you would look for them. The head of the Originals column carries a button that says ► **Hebrew** in the Old Testament and ► **Greek** in the New; press it and the chapter is read from the focused verse onward. And every verse in that column carries its own small ►, which reads that verse alone. The chapter button turns into ■ **Stop** while it is running; a verse button turns into ■. Press either again to stop.

While it reads a chapter it moves the highlight and scrolls the page one verse at a time, not one word at a time — so it keeps pace with your eye rather than twitching down the column. Reading a single verse deliberately does not scroll the page at all, because you just tapped that verse and moving it out from under you would be rude.

► **Listen** and ► **Hebrew** stop each other. Starting one always stops the other, because two voices reading two languages over the top of one another is not a feature anybody wanted.

What it does when there is no voice for the language

This is worth stating plainly because it is a deliberate refusal rather than a bug. Reading Hebrew or Greek aloud needs a Hebrew or Greek voice installed on your device, and most devices do not have one until you add it. If yours does not, the app tells you so — it says that no such voice is installed and that you can add one in your device's accessibility voice settings — and then it reads nothing.

It could instead read the transliteration in an English voice, and it will not. A few seconds of romanised Hebrew is a helpful approximation; several minutes of it is a different language delivered confidently and wrongly. Silence with an explanation is the honest answer, so that is what it gives.

7.5 Speed, pause, and which voice says it

Three controls govern how the original languages are spoken. They live at the top of the **Lexicon** tab, directly under the lookup box, because that is the tab you are already in when you are working with a word and wanting it said differently. All three are remembered between visits.

🔊 Speed	A slider from 0.3 to 1.0, and it starts at 0.6 — well under normal speaking pace, because the point of hearing a Greek word is to catch its shape, not to keep up with it. Drag it left for slower.
⏸ Pause	How much silence to leave between one original-language word and the next: 0 to 600 milliseconds, starting at 180 . At zero you get the old behaviour, a verse delivered as one run-on utterance. At 180 it sounds like somebody reading rather than a machine emptying a buffer.
Speak the Hebrew / Greek instead	A checkbox, off by default. It changes what tapping a single <i>word</i> does: off, you hear the sounding-out in your English voice; on, you hear the native voice as well.

The Pause slider is read fresh before every word, so if a chapter is already running and it sounds wrong, drag the slider and the very next word takes the new spacing. You do not have to stop and start again.

One thing these controls deliberately do not do

The chapter reader ignores the *Speak the Hebrew / Greek instead* checkbox entirely. That checkbox answers a different question — what should tapping a single *word* do. Pressing a button labelled ► **Greek** has already answered it. Wiring the chapter reader to the checkbox would give you a button that says Greek and reads English, which is worse than the feature being absent, because absent is at least honest.

The Speed slider governs the original-language reading. The English chapter reader and the Reading view still run at their own fixed pace, a little under normal. Whether they should answer to this slider too is an open question and it is in section 13.

7.6 Reading view

Reading view exists for the eyes first and the ears second. It takes the columns away and gives you one translation, top to bottom, in a single readable measure. There are two reasons it exists. One, sometimes you just want to read a chapter like a chapter. Two, and this is the real reason, a dedicated reading tool like Speechify needs a clean block of prose to point at, and a four-column parallel grid with superscript verse numbers is the worst possible thing to hand it. The hint in the corner says so out loud.

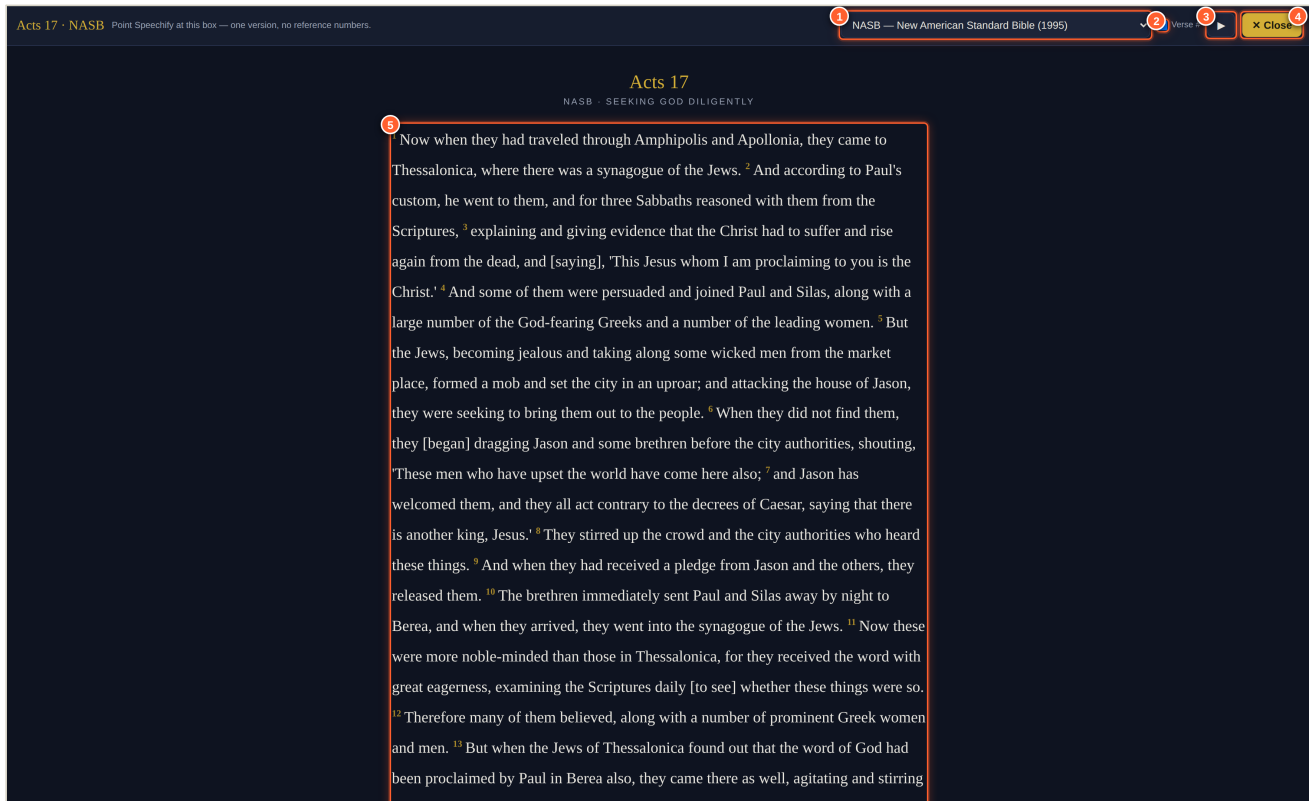


Figure 15. Reading view: one version, one column, and the option to drop the verse numbers entirely.

1	Version	Which single translation to show.
2	Verse numbers	Uncheck it and the numbers disappear, leaving pure prose. This is the setting that matters for a reading tool.
3	Read aloud	Reads this box with your device voice, same as the top-bar button but scoped to what you are looking at.
4	Close	Back to the study view. Esc does the same.
5	The text	One column, generous line spacing, serif type.

7.7 Asking out loud

In the Partner tab there is a microphone beside the Ask button. Tap it, say your question, and it sends itself — you do not have to press anything afterwards. What it heard is echoed on screen so you can see whether it understood you.

7.8 Conversation mode, hands-free

The checkbox marked *Conversation — hands-free* is dictation, sending, answering and reading-aloud wired into a loop. Turn it on and the app listens. You speak. It thinks. It speaks the answer. Then it listens again, without you touching anything. A line under the checkbox tells you which of those it is doing at any moment.

Three details make it usable rather than maddening. It only starts listening again after it has finished speaking, so it does not hear itself and answer its own question. If the browser cuts the listening session short, it re-arms silently. And if you say nothing for two minutes it stands down, and says out loud that it is doing so, rather than sitting there with the microphone open. **Esc** turns it off at any time.

This is the mode I built the whole app around. If you never touch the keyboard and never read a paragraph, you can still study a chapter properly.

7.9 What voice needs to work

All of it uses the free speech services built into your browser. Nothing is sent to a paid transcription service and there is nothing to configure.

Speaking to you	Works essentially everywhere. This covers ► Listen, Hear notes, Reading view aloud, and the Partner reading answers.
Speaking Hebrew or Greek to you	Needs a voice for that language installed on the device itself, which is a separate thing from the browser and is not there by default. If it is missing the app says so and reads nothing, rather than reading you the transliteration in an English accent. Section 7.4.
Listening to you	Needs a browser with speech recognition — in practice Chrome, Edge and Safari. If your browser does not have it, the microphone buttons and the conversation checkbox are simply not shown, rather than being shown broken.
Permission	The first time you use a microphone the browser asks. If you say no, the app tells you plainly that the microphone was blocked and how to allow it, rather than failing in silence.
Which voice	It uses your device's English voice for English, and the best Hebrew or Greek voice it can find for the originals. If you have installed a better one in your operating system settings, the app will use it.

8 The Study Partner

The Partner tab is an AI study companion that knows which passage you have open. Its job description is printed at the top of the tab, and it is short: ask anything about the open passage, and it answers like a good teacher — with a question back at you. Scripture stays the authority.

I want to be exact about why it behaves that way, because it is a deliberate design choice and it will occasionally frustrate you. A tool that hands you the meaning of a passage on request is a tool that does your observation for you, and observation is the part you cannot outsource without losing the whole benefit. So the Partner is tuned to point you back at the text: to ask what you noticed, to suggest a word worth looking up, to name the context you might be missing. It will answer a direct factual question directly. It will not do your homework.

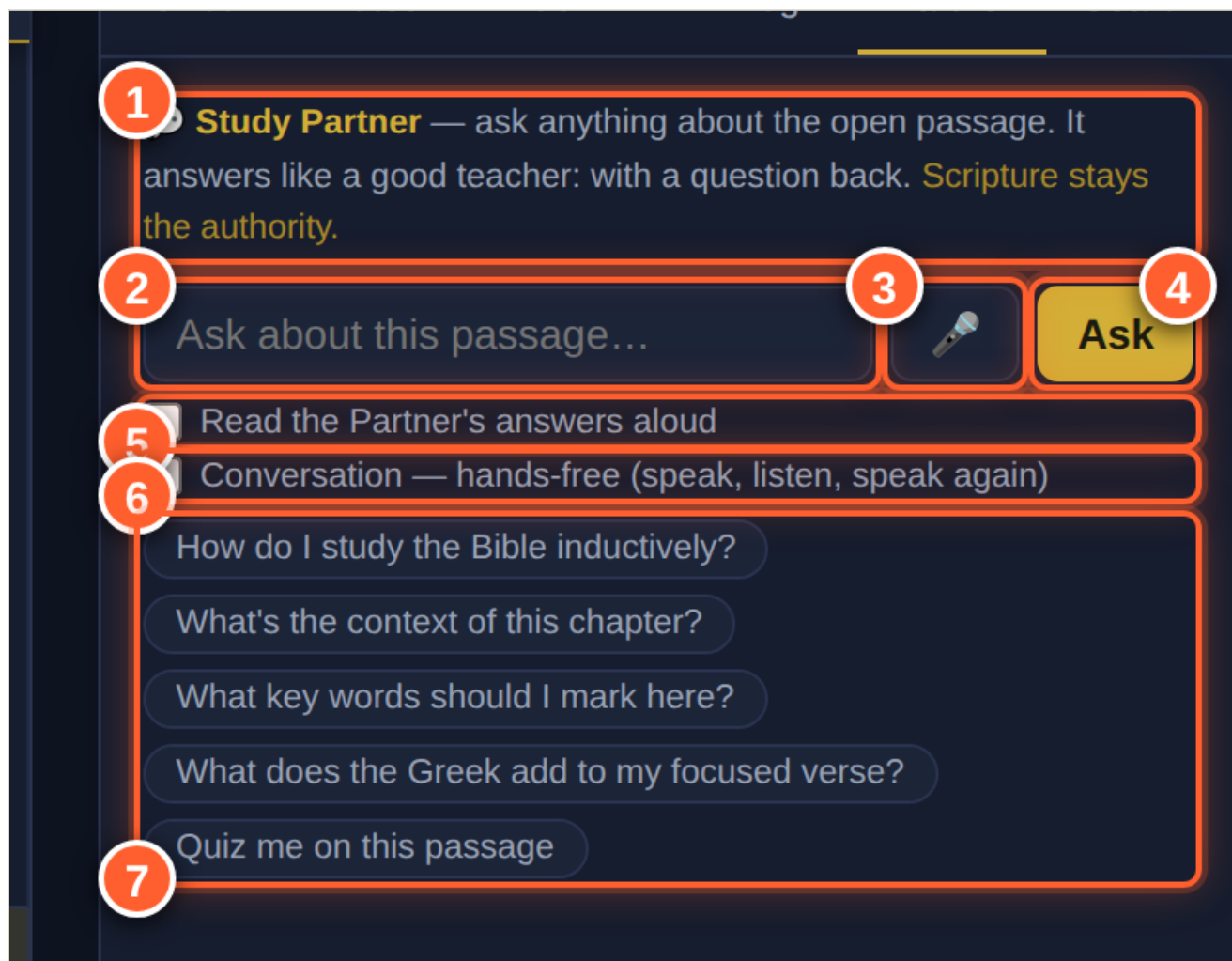


Figure 16. The Partner tab before you have asked anything.

1	What it is for	The standing description at the top of the tab.
2	Ask box	Type your question. Enter sends it.

3	Microphone	Ask out loud. It sends itself when you stop speaking. Section 7.5.
4	Ask	Sends the question.
5	Read answers aloud	Every answer is spoken as it finishes.
6	Conversation	Full hands-free mode. Section 7.6.
7	Starters	Five questions to get you moving. Tap one to send it.

The five starter chips are the questions I found myself asking most often: *How do I study the Bible inductively?*, *What's the context of this chapter?*, *What key words should I mark here?*, *What does the Greek add to my focused verse?*, and *Quiz me on this passage*. That last one is worth trying — being asked questions about a chapter you have just read is a better test of whether you actually studied it than any amount of re-reading.

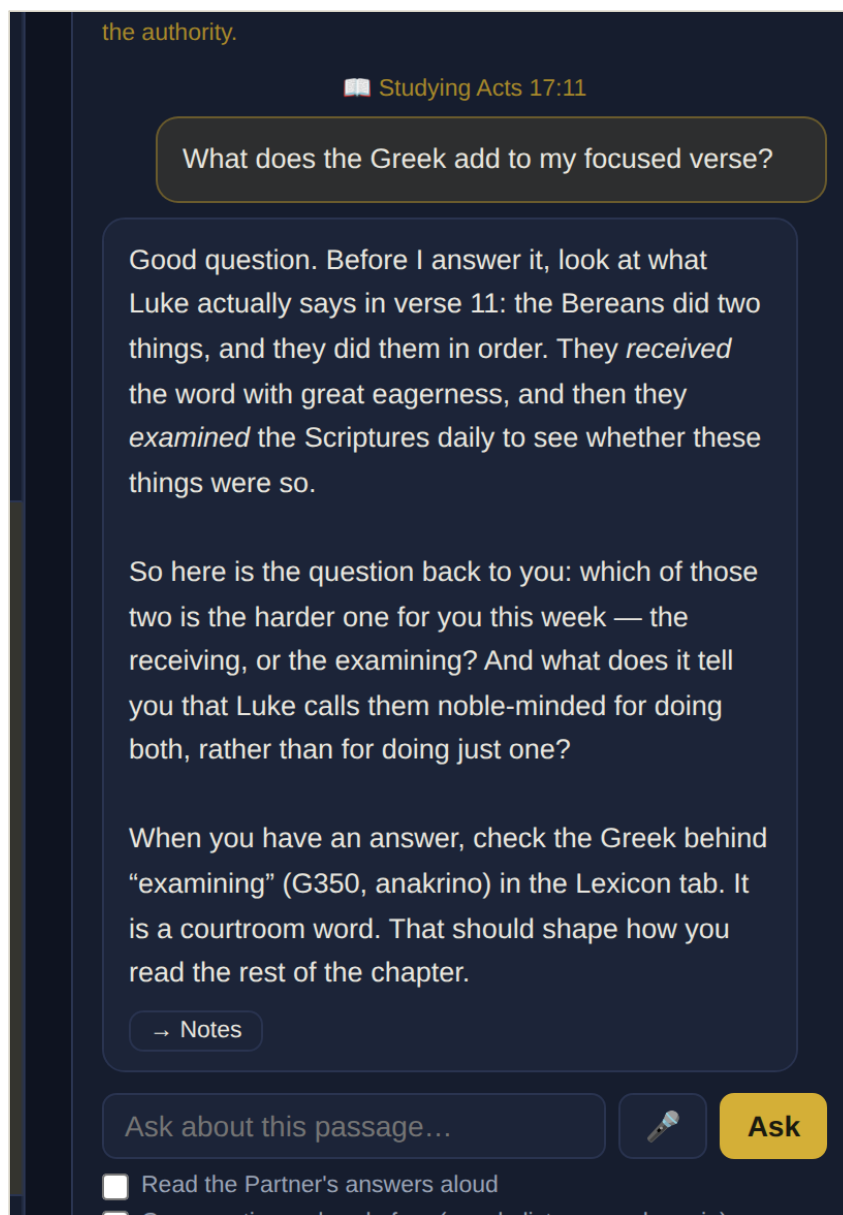


Figure 17. An exchange. Note the → **Notes** button under the answer.

Under every answer there is a small → **Notes** button. Press it and the answer is saved into your Interpretation notes for the chapter you are on. This is the bridge between talking about a passage and having actually studied it: the conversation does not evaporate when you close the tab.

What the Partner knows, and what it costs

It is sent more than the reference. With every question it gets the book, chapter and focused verse, the translation you are reading, the passage text itself, your marks, your Observation, Interpretation and Application notes for that chapter, and whatever commentary and blog material the panel has already loaded. That is what lets it answer about *your* study rather than in general, and you should know it is going before you write something in the notebook you would not want sent. It is instructed to keep Scripture as the authority and to teach rather than to conclude for you.

It runs through a small piece of code on my own hosting, which is what keeps the arrangement private and free to you. There is no sign-in and no per-question charge.

It is an AI. It can be wrong. Treat it exactly as you would treat a well-read friend who has not opened the passage as carefully as you just did — useful, worth listening to, and not the final word. The final word is the text.

9 Lexicon, Deeper, Blog and Search

Lexicon — the word-study bay

The Lexicon tab is where every word study lands, whichever of the three doors in section 5.2 you came through. You can also type into it directly: a Strong's number, a word, or a lexeme.

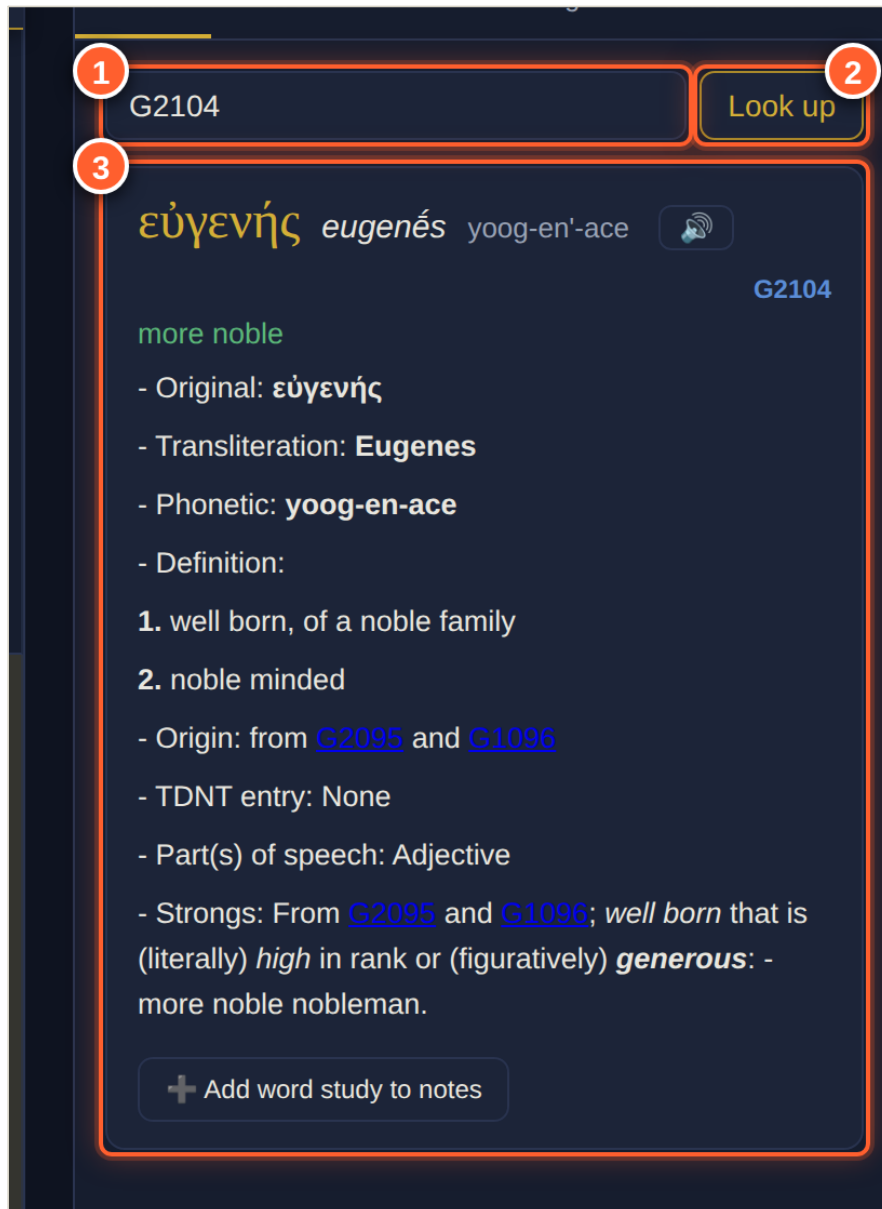


Figure 18. The Lexicon tab showing the entry behind more noble-minded in Acts 17:11.

1	Lookup box	A Strong's number like G25 or H7225, a word, or a lexeme.
2	Look up	Runs it. Enter does the same.
3	The entry	Lexeme, transliteration, pronunciation, part of speech, and the definition — with a speaker button to hear the word and a button to drop the whole entry into your notes.

Directly under the lookup box, and not shown in figure 18 because that figure predates them, sit the three voice controls described in section 7.5: **Speed**, **Pause**, and the **Speak the Hebrew / Greek instead** checkbox. They are in this tab rather than in the settings row because this is the tab you are already looking at when a word is being pronounced to you and you want it said slower.

Definitions come from Brown-Driver-Briggs for Hebrew and Thayer's for Greek. These are the standard public-domain lexicons; they are old, they are respected, and they are what free tools can honestly offer. The *Add word study to notes* button at the bottom of an entry saves you copying it out by hand.

Deeper — four commentaries on the open chapter

This tab was called **Guzik** and held one commentary. It is now called **Deeper** and holds four. This is the other large change in this version, and it changes the shape of the tab rather than just its contents, so it is worth walking through.

Open it and you do not land in a commentary. You land on a list, headed *Who has something on Acts 17* — with your own chapter in place of Acts 17. Each of the four commentators gets a card, and each card tells you what the app has actually found before you commit to reading it.

David Guzik — Enduring Word	The modern one, and the one most people came here for. Verse-by-verse, with a link out to the full page on enduringword.com .
Jamieson, Fausset & Brown	Public domain. Shorter than Guzik, and keyed tightly to verse numbers — the one to reach for when you want a fast answer about a single verse.
John Gill — Exposition of the Bible	Public domain. One entry per verse, and the fullest coverage of the four: Gill has something to say about nearly everything.
Matthew Henry	Public domain. The fullest of the four in bulk, but shaped differently — a few long expositions over a passage rather than one entry per verse.

Each card carries a flag. **ready** means the text is there, and the card tells you how many entries: *Acts 17 · 42 entries*. **checking** means the app is still asking. **couldn't load** means the ask failed — a network problem, not an absence. If a commentator simply has nothing on your chapter, no card appears at all. Those two are kept carefully apart: hiding a card because the network dropped would tell you something false about the commentator.

Guzik and Gill are asked for every chapter, so their cards appear immediately. The other two are checked in the background, and when both answers are in they are added together, in the order they are listed above — never in whichever-server-answered-first order. The list does not shuffle itself while you are reading it.

Tap a card and it opens into the commentary, scrolled to your focused verse with that verse's heading highlighted. The sticky header at the top then reads < **Deeper** and the name of what you are in. That header is the only control in the tab, and it is deliberately the only way back: one button, one meaning, in one fixed place. Whichever

commentary you choose stays chosen as you move from chapter to chapter.

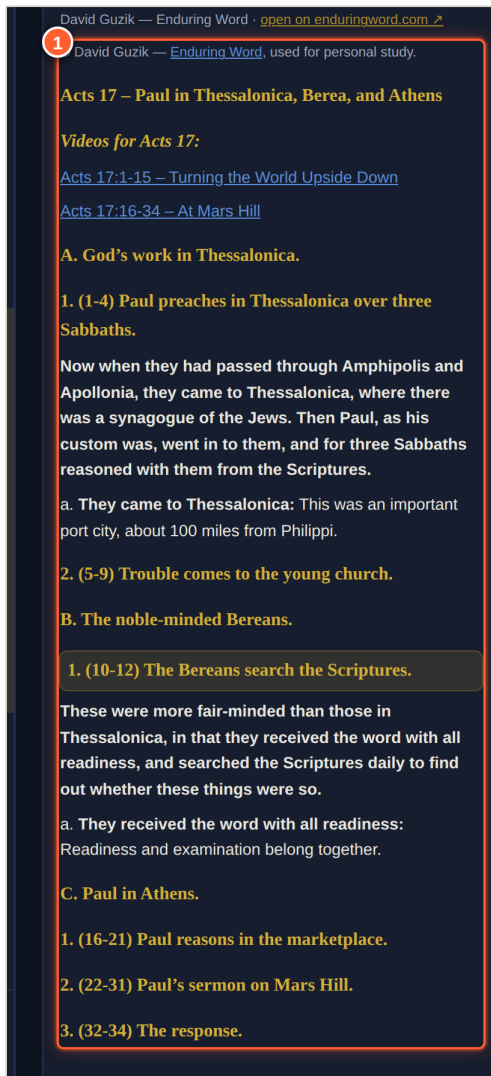


Figure 19. A commentary open on Acts 17 at verse 11 — the highlighted heading is the section containing the focused verse. This figure was captured from the previous version, when this was a standalone Guzik tab; the reading view itself is unchanged, but the card list and the < **Deeper** header described above are not shown. See section 14.

Blog — my own writing on the passage

This tab looks through the Smith For Christ blog for posts that discuss the chapter you have open, and shows you the ones it finds with a link out to the full post. If you are not me, this tab is a window onto my writing rather than yours; I left it in because a good number of the people using this are in my study groups.

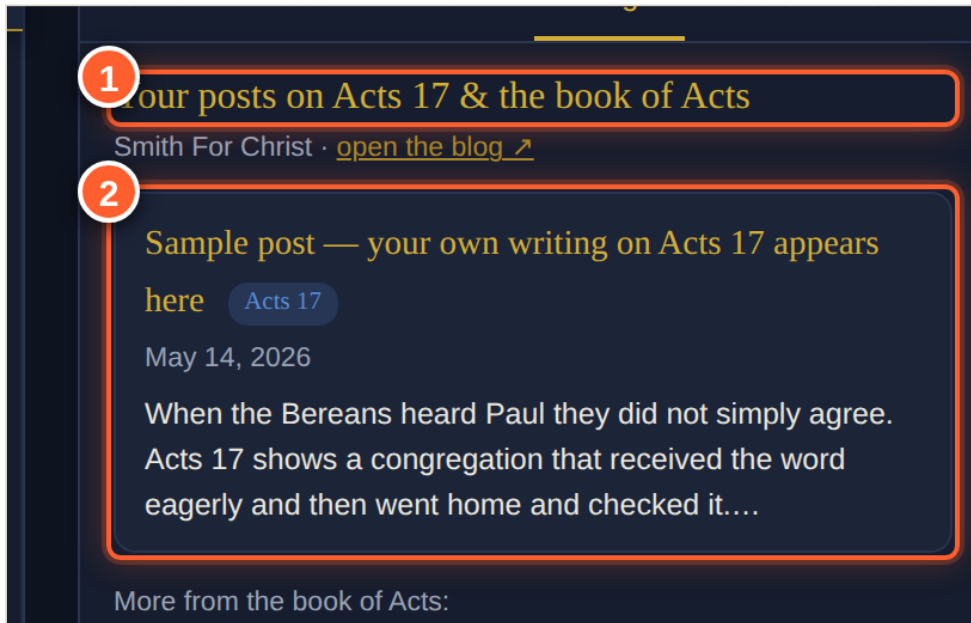


Figure 20. The Blog tab. See section 14 for a note about the sample post shown here.

Search — finding a phrase

Two ways in: the *Search Scripture* box in the top bar, or the box in this tab. Either way the results land here, each one a link that takes you to the verse.

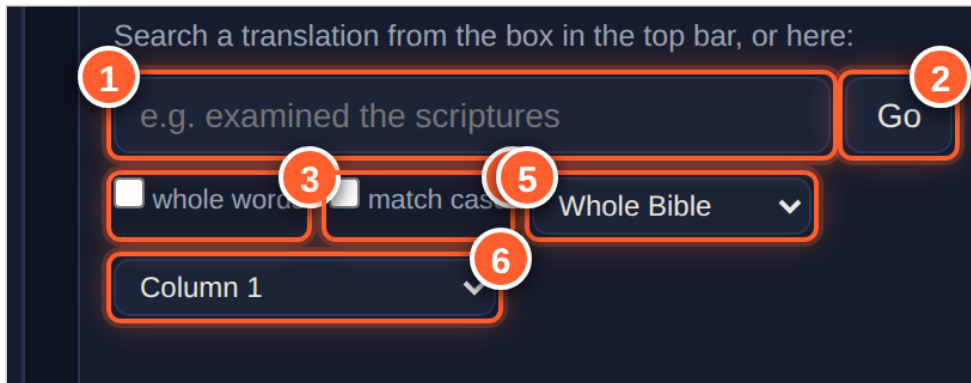


Figure 21. The Search tab controls.

1	Search box	The phrase to look for. Enter runs it.
2	Go	Runs it.
3	Whole words	Off, <i>love</i> also finds <i>beloved</i> . On, it finds only the word itself.
4	Match case	Off by default, which is almost always what you want.
5	Scope	Whole Bible, Old Testament only, or New Testament only.

6 Translation

Which translation to search. Worth changing: word choice differs between translations, so searching the KJV and the NASB for the same idea finds different verses.

A search tip that changed how I study

Search is the poor man's concordance, and it is better than nothing, but it searches *English words*. The same Greek word can be translated four different ways in one book, and a word search will never show you that. This is exactly the gap that every-occurrence Strong's search fills, and it is the next feature I am building. See section 13.

10 Settings, sharing, offline and updates

Sharing a verse

The web address at the top of your browser always points at the exact passage you are looking at. The **link** button in the top bar copies it — or, on a phone, opens the normal share sheet so you can text it. Anyone who taps it lands on the verse you were on, in their own columns and their own theme. Nothing of your notes travels with it.

Working offline

The app installs a small piece of itself into your browser so that it opens without a network. Chapters you have already read are kept too. So on a plane, or in a basement with no signal, the app opens, your notes are all there, and the chapters you have been working in come up. A chapter you have never opened will not, and when that happens the app says so in plain English rather than showing you a browser error — and it quietly tries once more on its own before it gives up.

Version and updates

The chip in the bottom-right corner shows which version you are running. Tap it for the About panel.

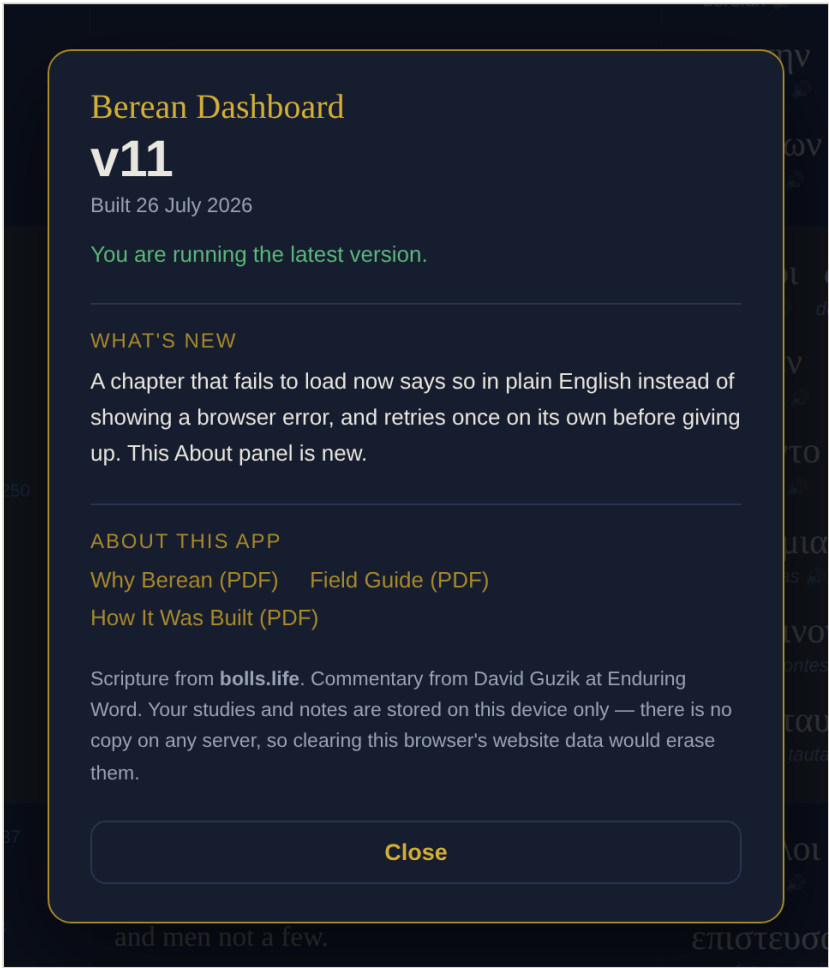


Figure 22. The About panel, reached by tapping the version chip.

Version and date	Which build you have and when it was made.
Status line	It checks, and then tells you: either that you are on the latest version, in green, or that a new one is waiting.
Update now	Takes the waiting version immediately, rather than whenever the browser gets round to it.
What's new	What changed in this version, in plain language.
The three PDFs	<i>Why Berean</i> for someone deciding whether to use it, the <i>Field Guide</i> for the method itself, and <i>How It Was Built</i> for the architecture. This manual joins them as the fourth.
The fine print	Where the text and commentary come from, and the plain warning that your notes live on this device only.

11 Where your work actually lives

Everything you write — every study, every note, every mark, every legend entry, and your choice of columns, text size and theme — is stored in your browser on the device you are using. There is no account. There is no copy on any server. Nobody, including me, can read your notes.

That is a real benefit and it comes with a real cost, and I would rather you understood both than be pleasantly surprised by one and ambushed by the other.

What you get	Total privacy. No sign-up. Nothing to cancel. No terms to accept. Your study is between you and God and nobody is counting the sessions.
What you give up	Automatic sync between devices. Your iPad and your laptop each keep their own notes. Moving a study between them is the export-and-import in section 6.9.
The genuine risk	If you clear this browser's website data, your notes go with it. Not the cache — the website data. It is the same action that logs you out of everything, and it is not something you do by accident, but it is worth knowing before someone tells you to clear your browser to fix an unrelated problem.

So do this, and stop worrying about it

At the end of a study session, press **.md** in the Notes tab and keep the file somewhere you keep things — iCloud, Drive, Dropbox, an email to yourself.

If you are on desktop Chrome or Edge, use **Auto-save to file** once and it will mirror every keystroke into a file from then on, and you can forget about it entirely.

That is the whole backup strategy. It takes four seconds and it removes the only real way to lose your work.

The app also asks your browser to treat its storage as durable rather than as something to be cleared when space runs short, and if saving ever does start failing it puts a warning on screen rather than losing your work quietly. If you ever see that warning, export immediately and then tell me.

12 When something goes wrong

A chapter will not load	The app retries once on its own, then tells you in plain English. It is nearly always the scripture source being briefly unavailable rather than anything on your end. Wait a moment and press the chapter arrow again.
No blue Strong's numbers	That translation does not carry tagging. Switch a column to the KJV, which does. This is a property of the translation, not a fault.
The Originals column is empty	Check the <i>Originals</i> box in the settings row. If it is checked and still empty, the original-language text for that chapter has not arrived; try again in a moment.
The microphone buttons are missing	Your browser does not support speech recognition. Chrome, Edge and Safari do. Firefox generally does not. The buttons are hidden rather than shown broken.
The microphone was blocked	You said no to the browser's permission prompt at some point. Allow the microphone for this site in your browser's site settings, then reload.
It reads in the wrong voice	It uses your device's English voice. Change or add a voice in your operating system's speech settings and it will pick it up.
Conversation mode stops on its own	By design, after two minutes with nothing said. It tells you out loud that it is standing down. Tick the box again.
My notes are not here	Almost always a different browser or a different device — notes are per-browser. Check you are in the same one. If they really are gone, this is what the .md export exists for.
The app looks out of date	Tap the version chip and use Update now .
It says a study already exists on import	It is asking whether to replace it. Say no and the incoming file arrives under a new name, so neither copy is lost.

If something is wrong that is not on this list, tell me. The list gets longer because people tell me things.

13 The roadmap

You asked for everything in the backlog, so this is everything, sorted by how certain it is rather than by how exciting it sounds. Anything below the first heading is not a promise.

Being built next

Every-occurrence Strong's search Click a Greek or Hebrew word and see every place in the Bible it occurs, regardless of how the English translated it. This is the single highest study value for the effort involved, the data source already supports it, and it is the next thing I build. It is also the honest answer to the limitation I admitted in section 9.

Written and waiting on me to test them

These are finished and sitting on branches. Each one merges when I have put it in front of real hands and watched what happens.

Mobile reading layout A better set of column choices and spacing on a phone-sized screen. This one merges last, after I have used it on my own phone for a while.

Accessibility structure Proper landmarks and headings so a screen reader can move through the app sensibly, and so keyboard-only navigation is coherent.

Storage durability More robust handling of the storage layer, and a clearer warning path if a browser ever starts refusing to save.

Specified, not yet built

Progressive commentary rendering A commentary on a long chapter arrives in one lump today, and with four of them in the Deeper tab that matters more than it used to. It should stream in so the first section is readable immediately.

Pacing for the English reader The ⚙ Speed slider governs the Hebrew and Greek reading only. The English chapter reader and the Reading view still run at a fixed pace. Whether they should answer to the same slider is a real question and I have not decided it — the reason for hesitating is that the slider was built for catching the shape of a single foreign word, and a whole English chapter at 0.6 would be a trial.

Keeping the screen awake while it reads A long chapter in Greek runs for several minutes, and on a tablet the screen locks before it finishes. There is a browser capability for holding the screen awake and it is the obvious fix; I want to know exactly how the lock behaves on a real iPad before I build against it.

A true interlinear Word-by-word alignment between the original and the English, rather than verse-by-verse. This needs a properly aligned text — MorphGNT or SBLGNT for Greek, OpenScriptures for Hebrew — and the first job is checking the licences, not writing code.

Under consideration

Ideas I think are good and have not committed to. Listing them is not the same as agreeing to build them.

AI assistance inside notes	Something like “summarise my observations” or “what have I not asked yet?” from within the notebook. The risk is obvious and it is the reason this is not already built: the moment the app writes your observations for you, it has taken the part you needed to do yourself.
Cross-references	A Treasury of Scripture Knowledge panel for the focused verse.
A proper print sheet	A dedicated printable layout, beyond what the PDF button produces today.
A custom domain	A shorter address than the current one.
Hosting the artwork myself	Housekeeping, not a feature.

Decided against

Direct export to Google Docs	It would require running a second server and holding credentials on your behalf, which trades away the exact thing section 11 is about. The Word export opens in Google Docs perfectly well, so the need is already met.
Accounts and sync	Same reason. There is no version of sync that does not involve me holding your notes.

14 Credits, sources and a word about the figures

Where the words come from

Scripture text and original-language text come from **bolts.life**. Commentary now comes from four hands: **David Guzik**, from **Enduring Word**, used for personal study and credited with a link out to the original on every panel; and three that are in the public domain — **Jamieson, Fausset & Brown**, **John Gill's Exposition of the Bible**, and **Matthew Henry**. Each is named on its own panel; none of them is anonymous in this app, and none of them is mine. Hebrew definitions are Brown-Driver-Briggs; Greek definitions are Thayer's. Speech in both directions is the free capability built into your own browser, including the Hebrew and Greek voices — the app supplies no audio of its own and records nothing.

About the figures in this manual

Every figure here is a real screenshot of a real browser with real Acts 17 text, real Strong's tagging, real Greek, and real lexicon output. The study shown throughout — the notes, the ten marks on Acts 17, the legend, the second Romans study — is a worked example I set up so the figures would show a notebook with something in it rather than empty boxes.

But the figures were captured from v11, and this is the v12 manual. The text is v12 throughout — every label, every button name, every behaviour in these pages was checked against the version you are running, line by line, not remembered. The pictures are one version behind, and rather than quietly hope you do not notice, here is exactly where that shows.

Figure 4 — the top bar	The listen button is shown with its old label, ► <i>Read</i> . It now says ► <i>Listen</i> . Nothing else about it changed.
Figure 18 — the Lexicon tab	Captured before the three voice controls were added. On your screen there is a Speed slider, a Pause slider and a native-voice checkbox directly under the lookup box. Section 7.5 describes them.
Figure 19 — the commentary	Captured when this was a standalone Guzik tab. The reading view itself looks the same, but the tab is now called Deeper, it opens on a card list rather than straight into a commentary, and the header reads ◀ Deeper . Section 9 describes what is actually there.
The Originals column	Wherever it appears, it was captured before it had reading buttons. The head of the column now carries ► Hebrew or ► Greek , and each verse carries a small ►.

Two older caveats still stand. In **figure 20**, the Blog tab, the post shown is a clearly labelled sample rather than a real Smith For Christ post — the live blog feed could not be reached when these were captured. In **figure 17**, the Study Partner exchange, the answer shown is a written-out representative answer in the Partner's actual style rather than a captured live response.

Everything on every figure that is not named in this section is the real thing, and the figures will be recaptured for the next revision.

The companion documents

Why Berean	The short case for why this is different from a reference site. The one to hand to a study group.
Field Guide	The inductive method itself, step by step, worked inside this app.
How It Was Built	The architecture, for anyone who wants to know how a single HTML file does all this.
This manual	The complete reference. Every control, every panel, every button.

One last thing.

This app exists because my brother wanted to study the Bible and the tools were in his way. If it is in your way somewhere, tell me, because that is the only thing I am actually trying to fix.

The Bereans were not praised for being clever. They were praised for two things together: they received the word eagerly, and they checked it daily. Eagerness without examination is enthusiasm. Examination without eagerness is homework. Hold both.

Ed

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