THE PASTOR'S RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The complete *tutorial*

A walk through every part of the app, from your first study to preaching from a tablet, shown on the real screens with step-by-step instructions.

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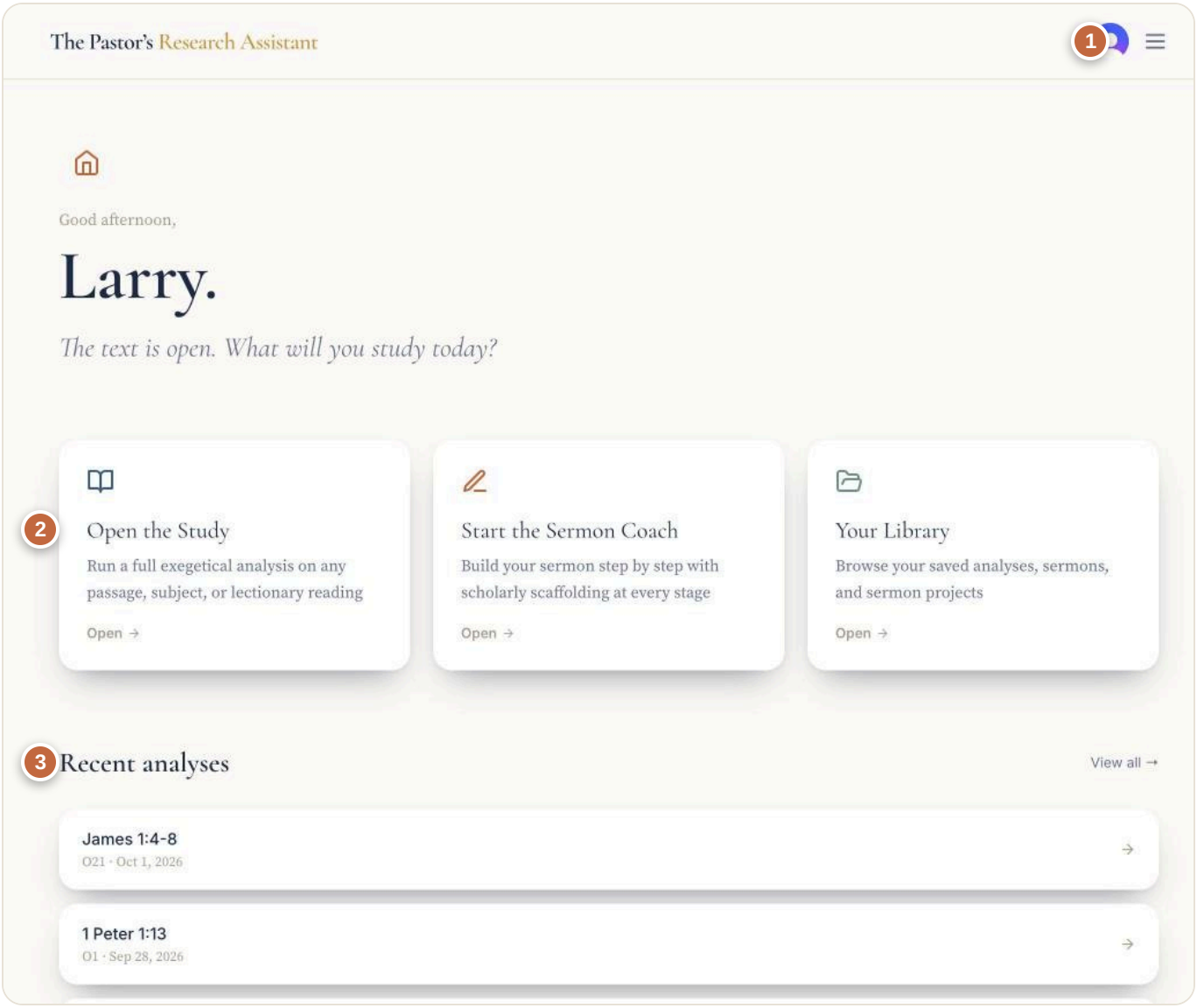
1 Find your way around

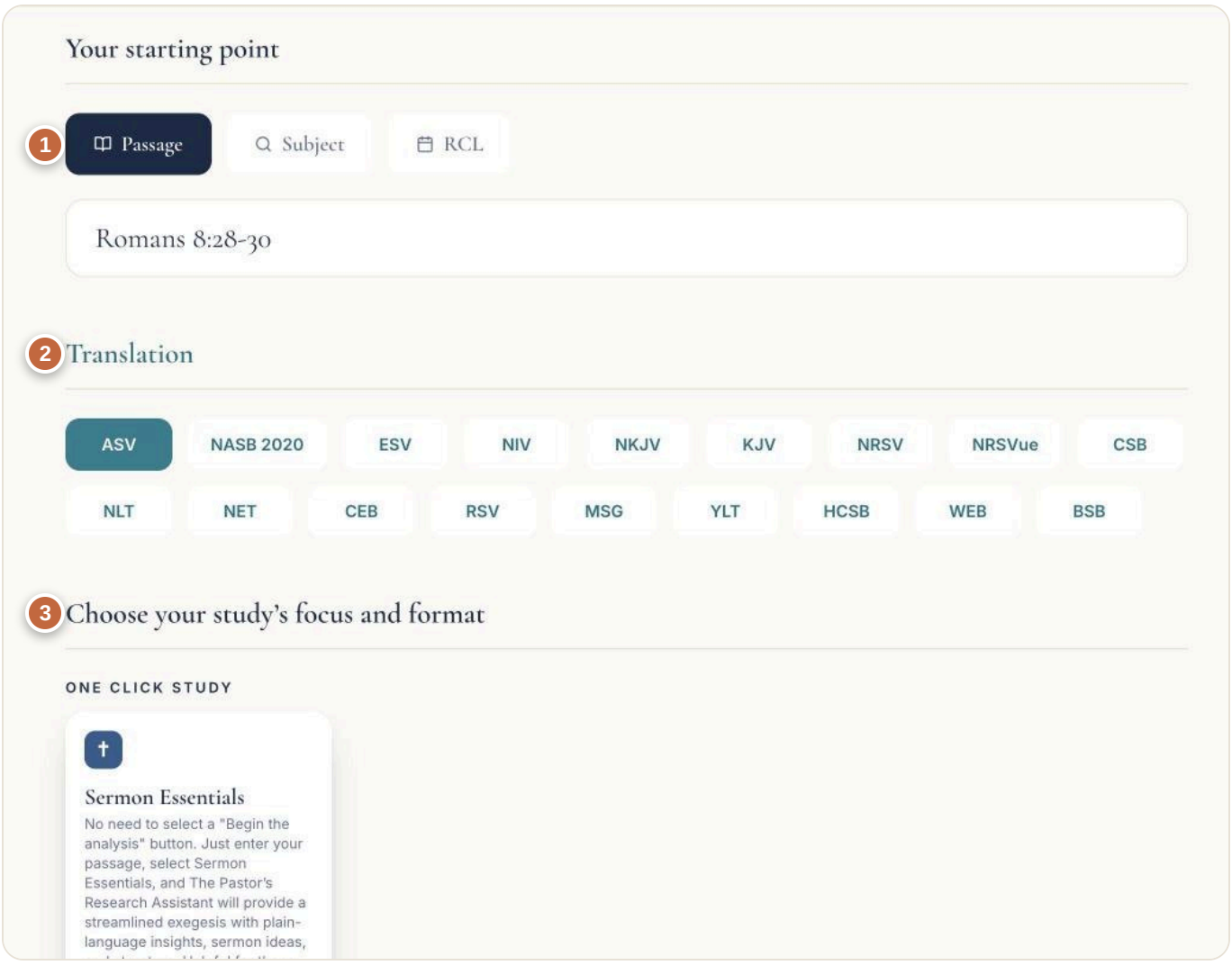


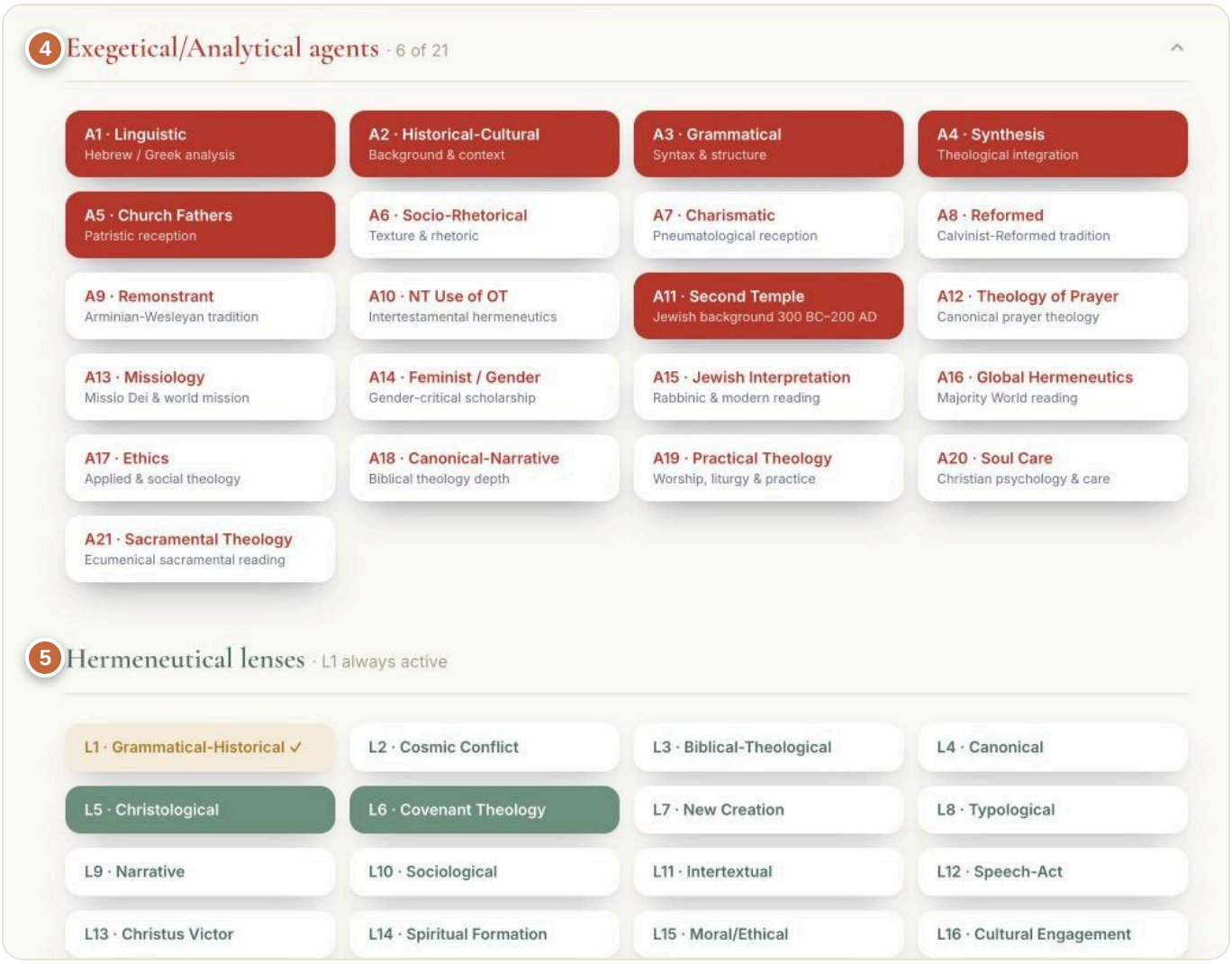
When you sign in you land on your home page. It greets you, points you to the three things you will do most, and shows your recent work. Every part of the app is one click away in the menu.

1. The menu holds every part of the app: Home, Study, Coach, Builder, Synthesis, Recap, Library, Series, Notes, Calendar, Learn, and Guide. On a wide screen it runs across the top of the page; on a laptop or tablet, press the menu button (three lines) to open it.
2. The three cards, Open the Study, Start the Sermon Coach, and Your Library, are the quickest way into the work: research a passage, build a sermon step by step, or return to what you have saved.
3. Recent analyses lists the studies you have run lately. Click any one to reopen it, or choose View all to see your whole Library, where Across the canon shows every book of the Bible you have preached, studied, or planned.

4. The Guide in the menu opens the written manual whenever you want it; this Tutorial walks you through each screen with pictures.

2 Open the text in the Study





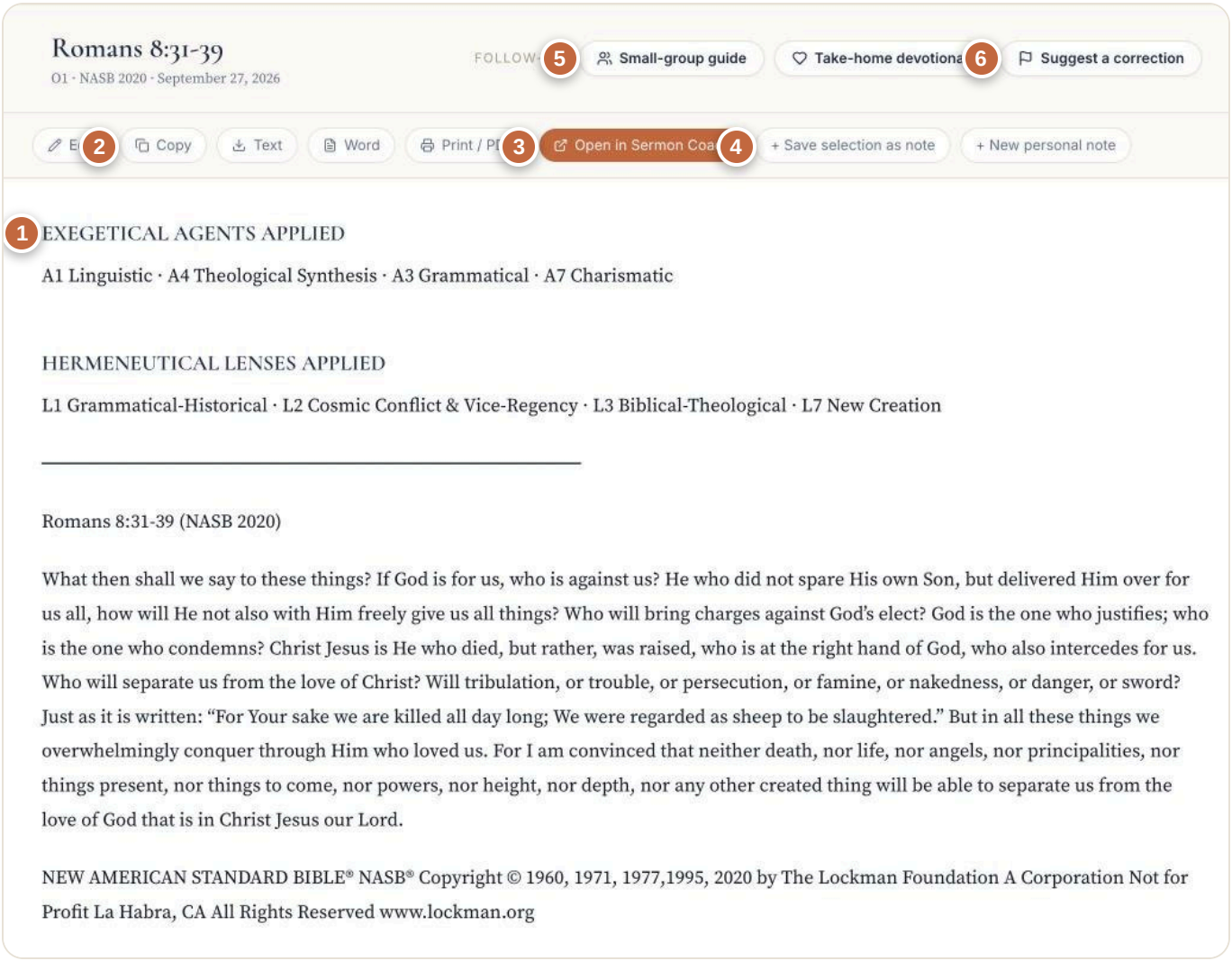
The Study is where your research assistant does the research on the passage or subject you choose: the Hebrew and Greek, the history behind the text, and how the Church has read it from the Fathers to the scholars writing today. You decide what to study, which scholarly voices and reading angles to bring, and what form the result should take.

1. Choose your starting point. Passage studies a single text; enter a reference like Romans 8:28-30. Subject surveys a theme across the whole canon, for example justification by faith. RCL studies the Revised Common Lectionary readings for a chosen Year and Sunday together as one unit.
2. Choose a translation. The study quotes and analyzes from the English translation you pick.
3. Choose an output format. This is what gets produced: a full exegesis, a preaching outline, an accessible Bible study, a devotional, an academic lecture, and more. Each is written for its own purpose.
4. Choose your exegetical agents. Agents are the scholarly voices your assistant gathers from: linguistic, historical, grammatical, the Church Fathers, the Second Temple background, the Reformed and Wesleyan traditions, and more. Turn on the ones you want; more agents mean greater breadth, a focused few mean a particular emphasis.
5. Choose your hermeneutical lenses. Lenses are the angles the text is read through: grammatical-historical, which is always on, plus Christological, covenantal, canonical, narrative, and others. Add the ones that fit your aim.

6. Press Begin the analysis at the bottom of the page. A full study takes several minutes. It runs in the background, so you can leave the page; it appears in your Library, and here, the moment it is finished.

> **TIP**
>
> Not sure where to begin? A Passage study with the default agents and a Full Exegesis output is a dependable first study for any text.

3 Read and export your study



I. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The passage under examination is Romans 8:31-39, read from the NASB 2020 as the primary English rendering. This is a New Testament text; the language of composition is Koine Greek. What follows is the Greek text of the critical editions, verse by verse, with transliteration and a working literal rendering supplied for exegetical control. The working rendering is deliberately wooden at points in order to expose Greek word order and clause boundaries; it is not offered as a competitor to the published versions but as a tool for tracking the argument.

Verse 31

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;

Ti oun eroumen pros tauta? ei ho theos hyper hēmōn, tis kath' hēmōn?

Working rendering: "What, then, shall we say with reference to these things? If God is for us, who against us?"

Verse 32

ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται;

hos ge tou idiou huiou ouk epheisato all' hyper hēmōn pantōn paredōken auton, pōs ouchi kai syn autō ta panta hēmin charisetai?

Working rendering: "He who indeed did not spare his own Son but handed him over on behalf of us all, how shall he not also, together with him, graciously give us all things?"

Verse 33

τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαιῶν·

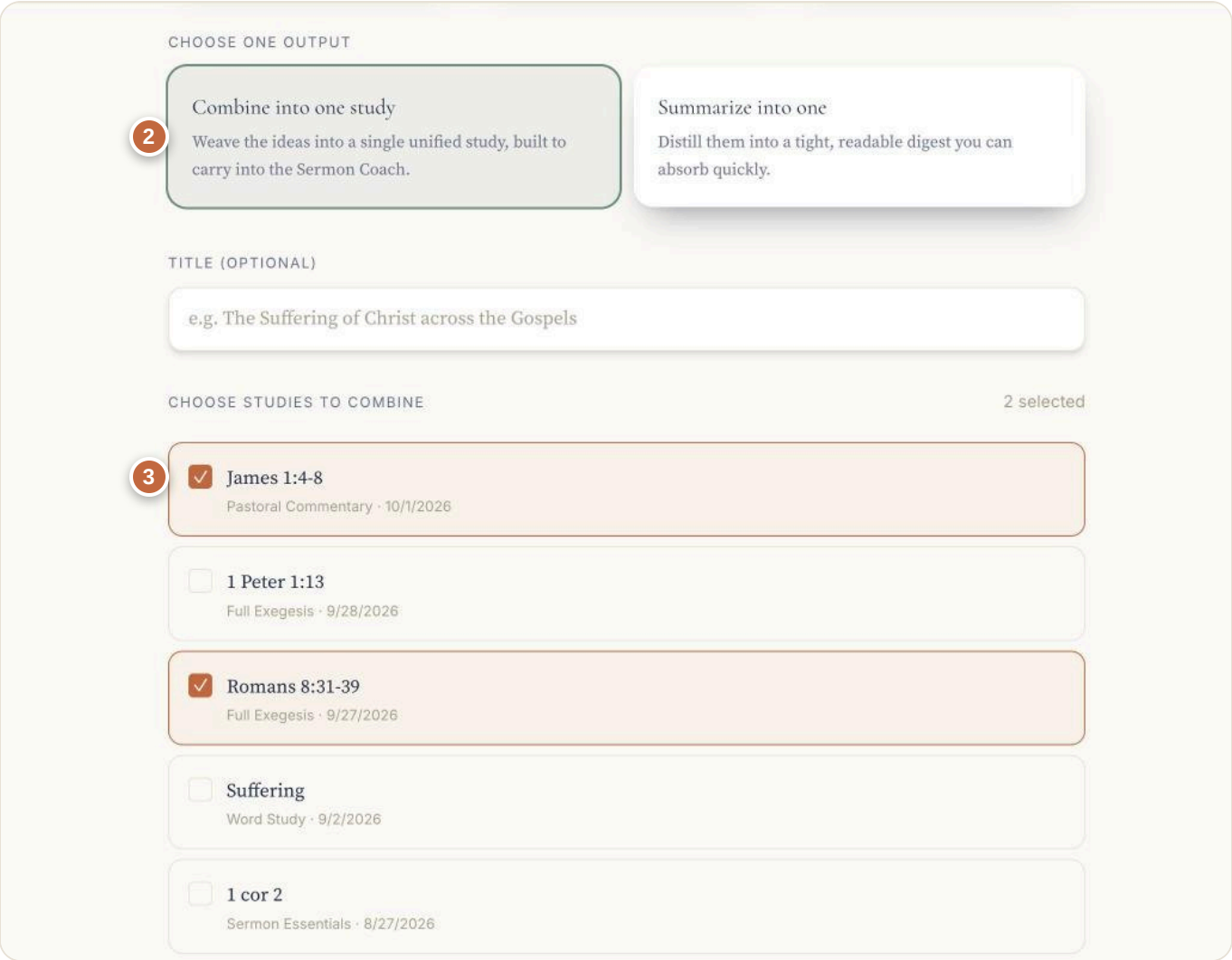
tis enkalesei kata eklektōn theou? theos ho dikaiōn.

Working rendering: "Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies."

When a study is ready it opens as a clean, sectioned document. A Full Exegesis begins with the text itself, verse by verse in the original language with the English beside it, then moves outward to interpretation and application, following the agents and lenses you chose.

1. Read through the sections in order. The top of the study lists the agents and lenses that shaped it.
2. Use the buttons along the top to edit, copy the text, or export it as plain text, Word, or PDF. Your chosen Scripture translation is inserted for you.
3. Open in Sermon Coach carries this study straight into the Coach as the foundation for a sermon.
4. Highlight any sentence worth keeping and press Save selection as note to keep it in your Notes, where you can find it later by search or by hashtag.
5. Follow-up turns the study into a Small-group guide or a Take-home devotional for your people.
6. If you spot something wrong, Suggest a correction sends it to us. Confirmed corrections are applied to every future study.

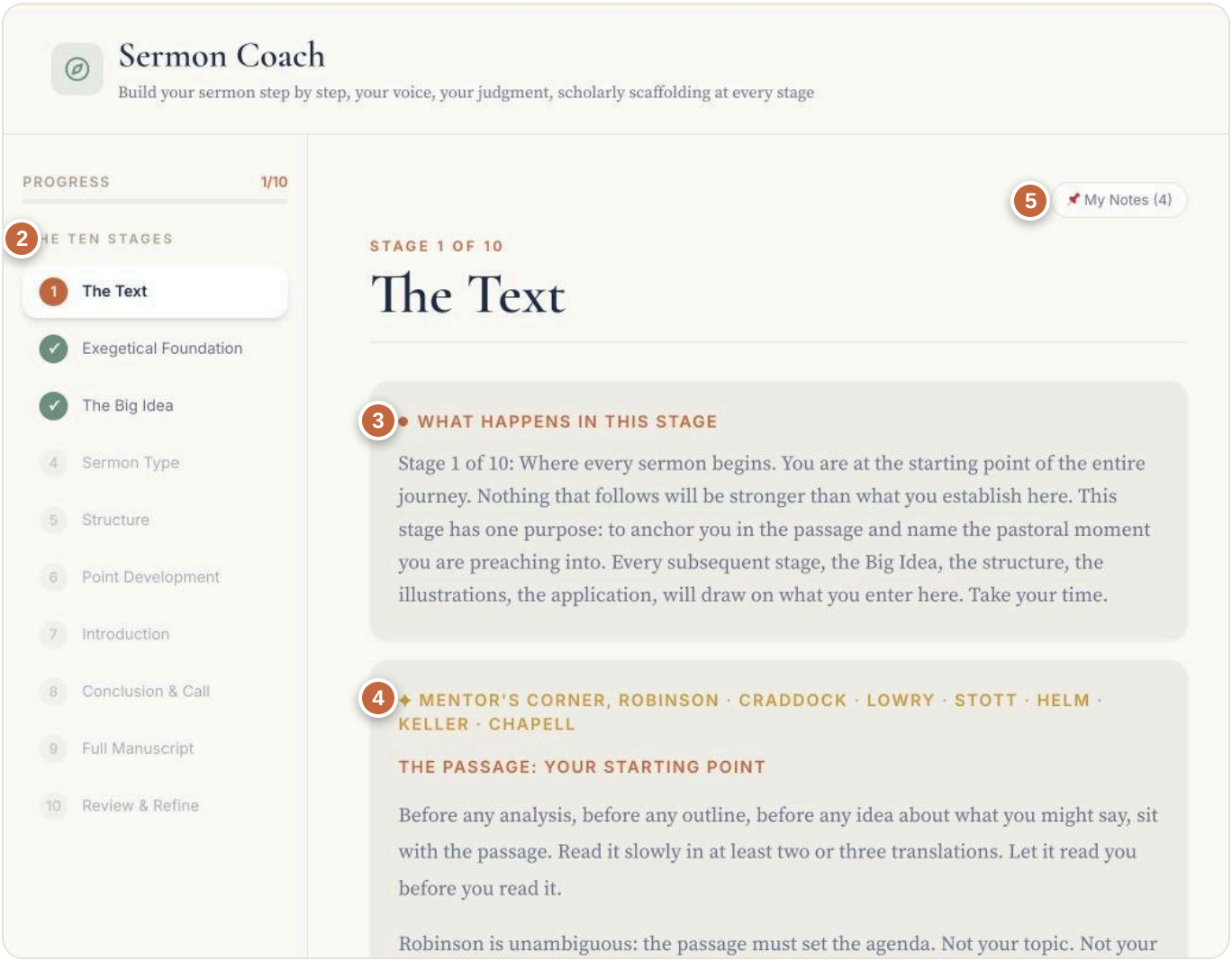
4 Weave studies together with Synthesis



Sometimes a message gathers a theme across several passages, or you want the essence of several studies in one place. Synthesis takes two or more of your completed studies and brings them together into a single, coherent piece.

1. Open Synthesis from the menu.
2. Choose Combine into one study, which reads them as a single connected treatment, or Summarize into one, which distills them into a tight digest. Give it a title if you like.
3. Select two or more of your completed studies from the list. A check mark shows each one you have chosen.
4. Press Combine (or Summarize) at the bottom of the list. When it is ready, open the result on its own, or send it into the Sermon Coach to build one message from many texts.

5 Build your sermon in the Sermon Coach

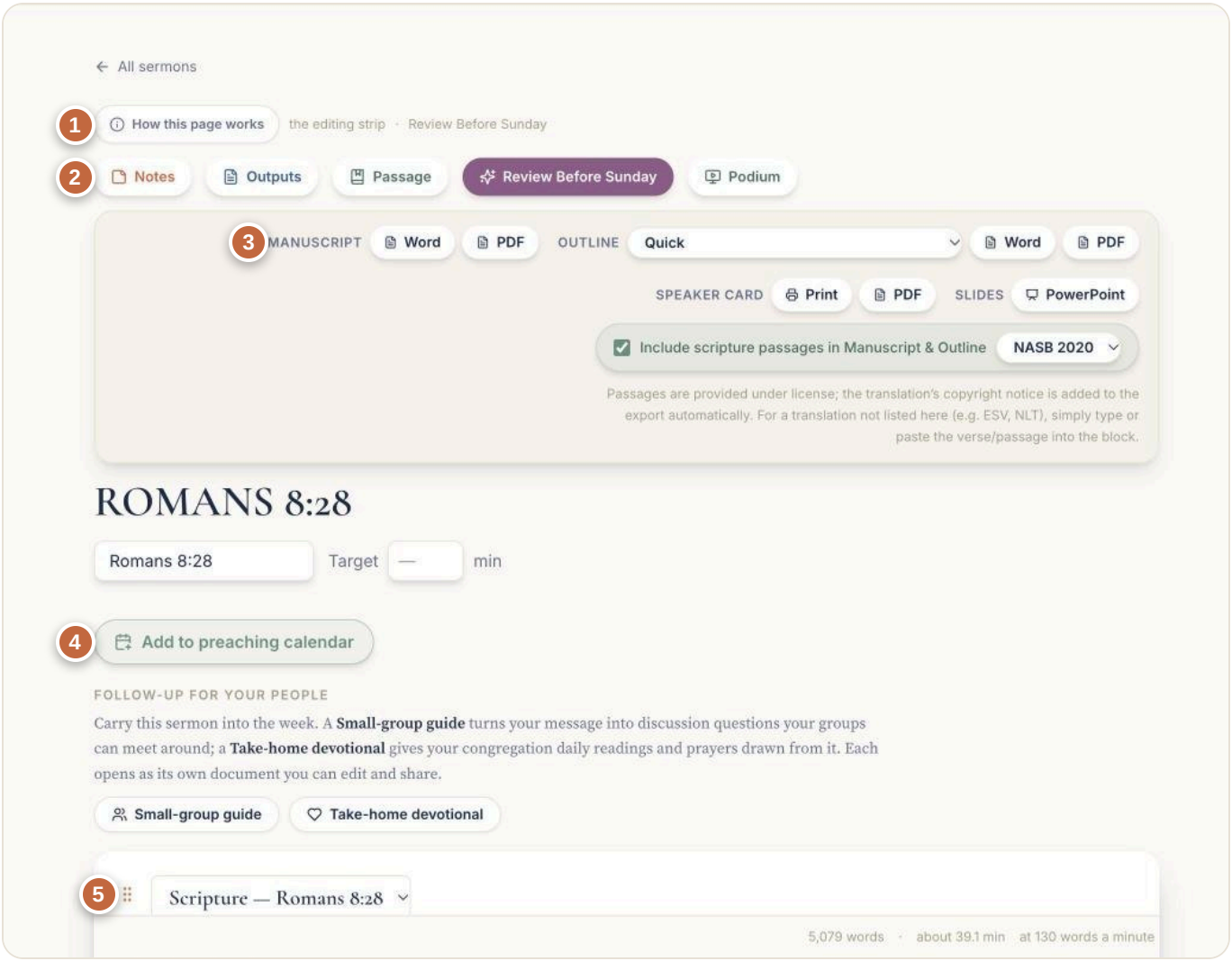


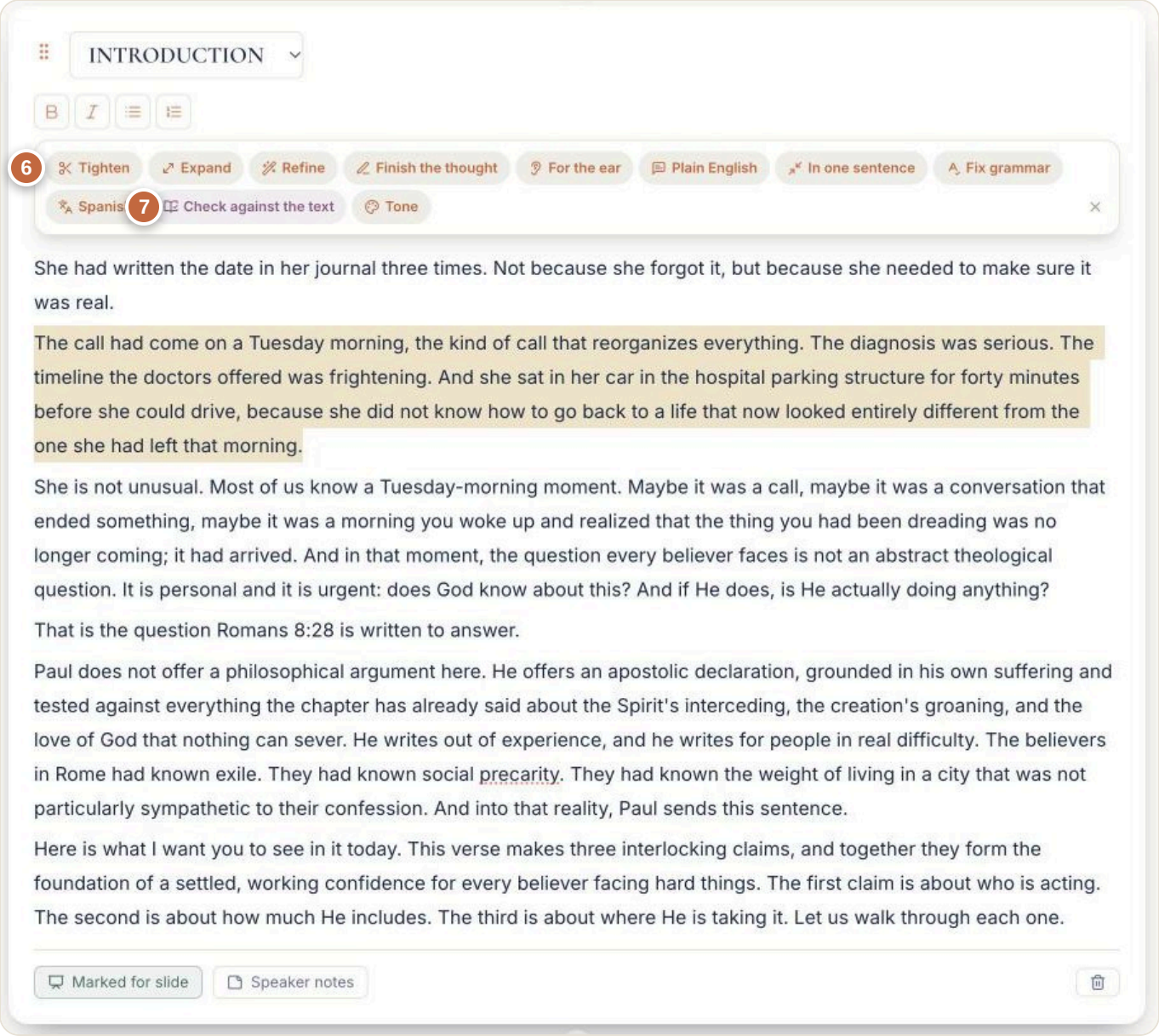
The Sermon Coach walks you through building your own sermon across ten stages, with scholarly support at every step. It never writes the sermon for you; the message that emerges is yours. Your assistant brings the research, and you keep the judgment, the voice, and the pulpit.

1. Open the Coach from the menu, or from a study with Open in Sermon Coach. If you have already run a study on this passage, it loads as your exegetical foundation.
2. Move through the ten stages in order, shown down the left: the Text, Exegetical Foundation, the Big Idea, Sermon Type, Structure, Point Development, Introduction, Conclusion and Call, Full Manuscript, and Review and Refine. A check mark shows each stage you finish.
3. At each stage, read What happens in this stage first: it tells you what the stage is for and what later stages will draw from it.
4. Then read the Mentor’s Corner, which brings the counsel of respected teachers of preaching such as Robinson, Craddock, Lowry, Stott, Keller, and Chapell. Generate suggestions where they are offered, then write your own answer.

5. Open My Notes at any point to pull in ideas you saved earlier. When the manuscript is complete, carry it into the Sermon Builder to shape it and review it.

6 Shape and edit in the Sermon Builder





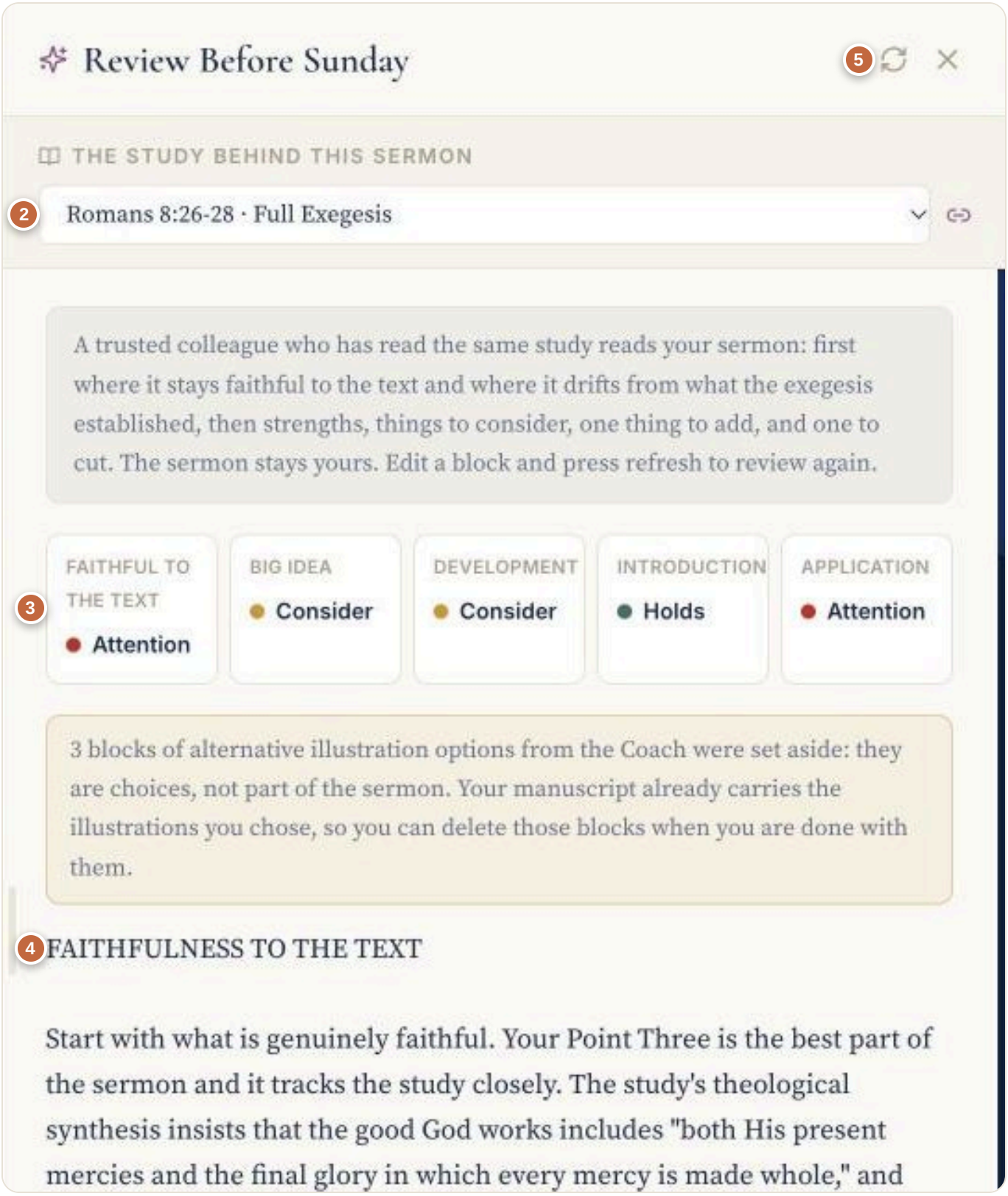
The Sermon Builder is where your sermon takes its final shape, whether it arrives from the Sermon Coach or you start fresh with New sermon. Each part of the sermon is a block you can write in, rename, and move, with your study, your notes, and the passage open beside it.

1. How this page works opens a full walkthrough of the page, section by section. Open it once; it is worth the five minutes.
2. Notes, Outputs, and Passage each open a panel beside the draft: your saved notes, your studies (the one behind this sermon opens first), and the passage in your choice of translation. Highlight anything in a panel and drag it into a block.
3. Export a Manuscript (Word or PDF), an Outline, a Speaker Card for the pulpit, or PowerPoint slides, with the Scripture inserted in your chosen translation.
4. Add to preaching calendar places the sermon on its Sunday. Follow-up turns it into a Small-group guide or a Take-home devotional for the week after.
5. Below are the blocks. Name each one with the dropdown (Introduction, Point, Illustration, Conclusion, and so on), drag to reorder, and type / on an empty line to add the next. Name a block Illustration or Conclusion and a button appears that

drafts options for it.

6. Highlight a sentence or a paragraph and the editing strip opens above it: Tighten, Expand, Refine, Finish the thought, For the ear, Plain English, In one sentence, Fix grammar, Spanish, and Tone. Each one shows you a rewrite first; Replace selection or Keep mine.
7. Check against the text reads your sentence against the study this sermon came from and gives you notes: what it rests on, what it claims beyond the study, and the original word when the point turns on one. It gives notes, never a rewrite.

7 Review Before Sunday



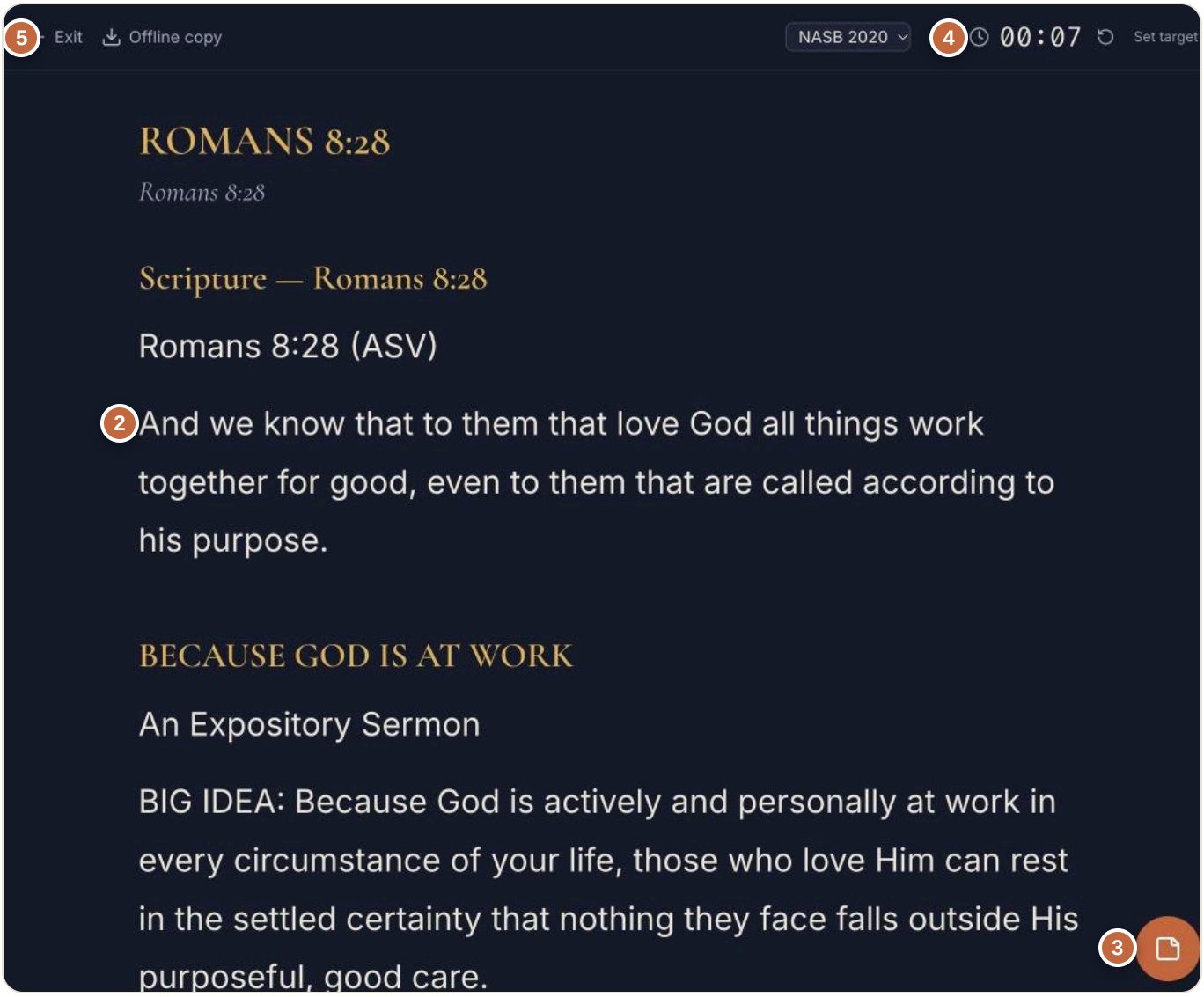
When the manuscript is finished, Review Before Sunday reads it the way a trusted colleague would if he had done the same exegesis you did and then sat down with your manuscript on Friday afternoon. It opens the study behind the sermon and reads the two side by side.

1. In the Builder, press Review Before Sunday. The panel opens beside your draft. A review of a long sermon takes a few minutes.
2. The study behind this sermon is linked for you: the study on this passage whose verses overlap the sermon’s, deepest first. Change it in the dropdown if it chose the wrong one.
3. The readiness strip shows where to read first: Holds means nothing to change, Consider means worth a look, Attention means fix it before Sunday. It is a guide to the review, not a score.
4. Faithfulness to the Text comes first: where the sermon stands on what the study found, where it claims more than the text carries, where a distinction got flattened, and what the study treated as central that never reached the sermon. Then strengths, things to consider, one thing to add, and one to cut, each quoting your own words.
5. Edit your blocks, then press the refresh arrow to review again.

TIP

Where your own study says serious interpreters differ on a verse, preaching one of those readings is faithful, and the review treats it that way.

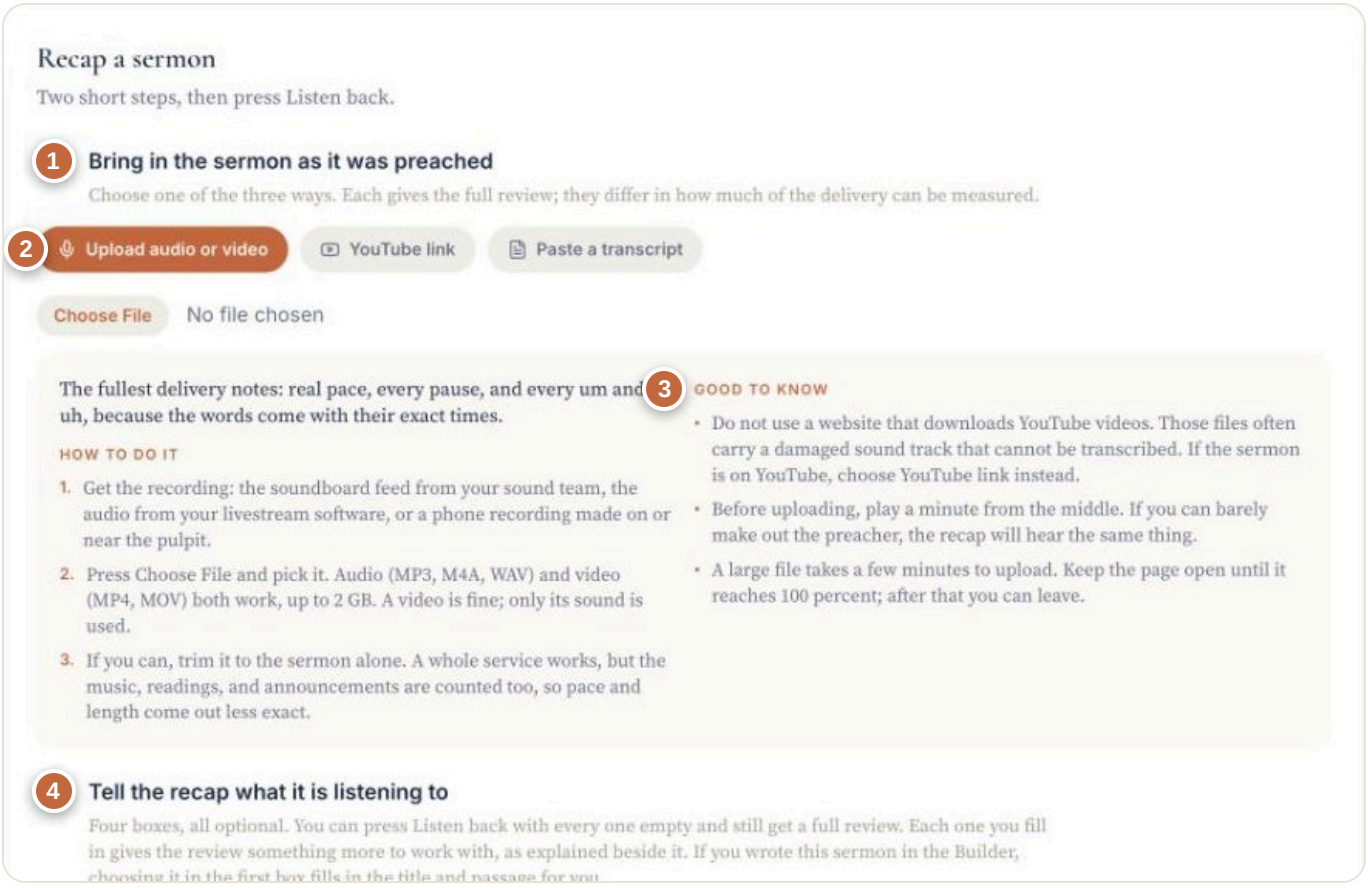
8 Preach from Podium mode

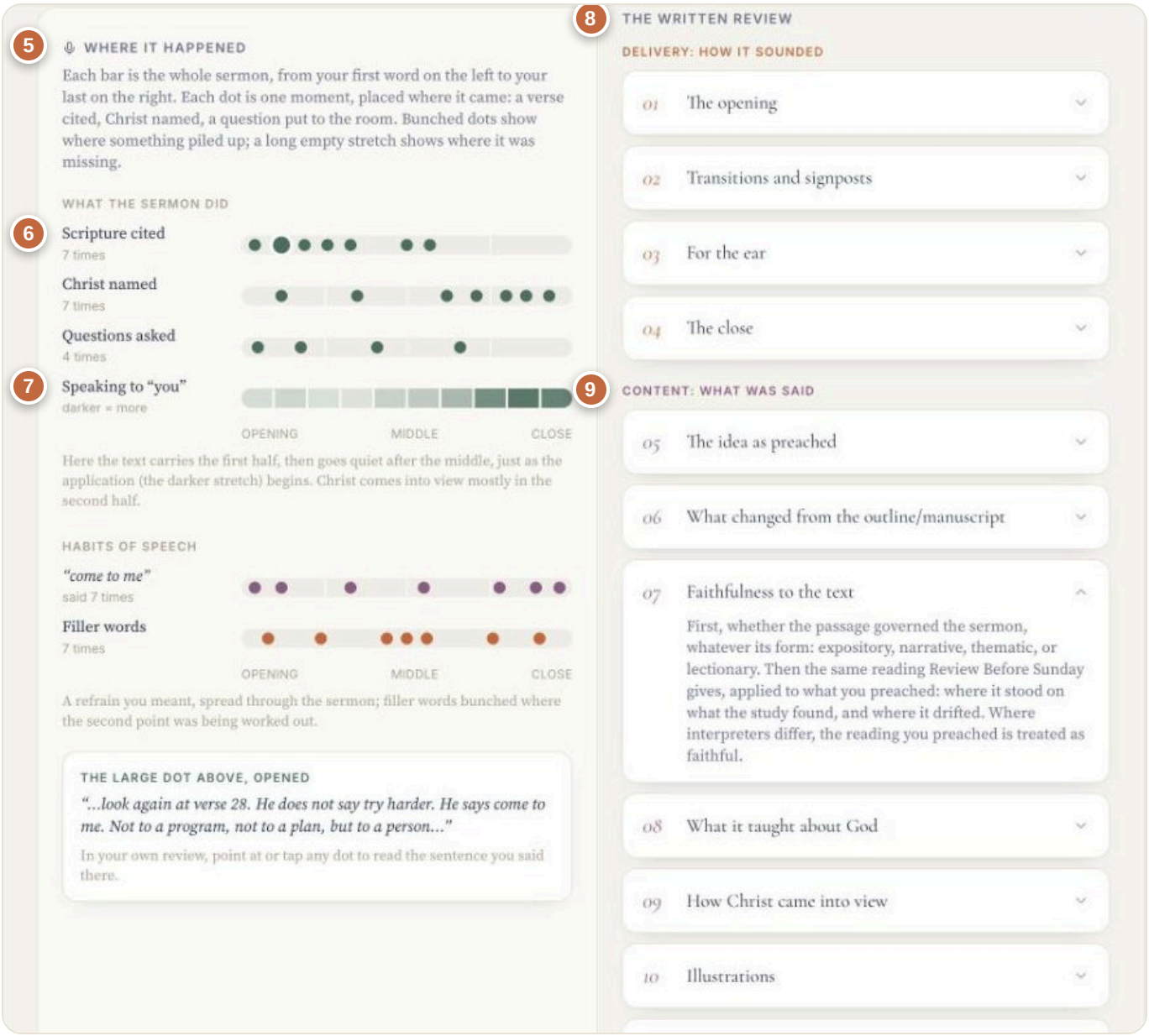


Podium mode turns a tablet or phone into the pulpit: large, calm, and free of distraction. Everything you need to preach is on one screen.

1. Open Podium from the Builder.
2. Scroll your manuscript as you preach; the text is set large and clear for reading at arm’s length.
3. Press the notes button to slide out the speaker notes you added. The screen splits so your notes never cover your words.
4. Keep an eye on the running timer, set a target length, and switch between day and night mode to suit the room.
5. Offline copy downloads one file that works without an internet connection, for a pulpit with no signal.

9 Listen back with Recap





After you preach, Recap listens back with you. It reviews how the sermon was delivered and what was said, against the outline or manuscript you wrote and what the text established, using the criteria employed by major preaching models. Nothing is scored; every observation points at your own words.

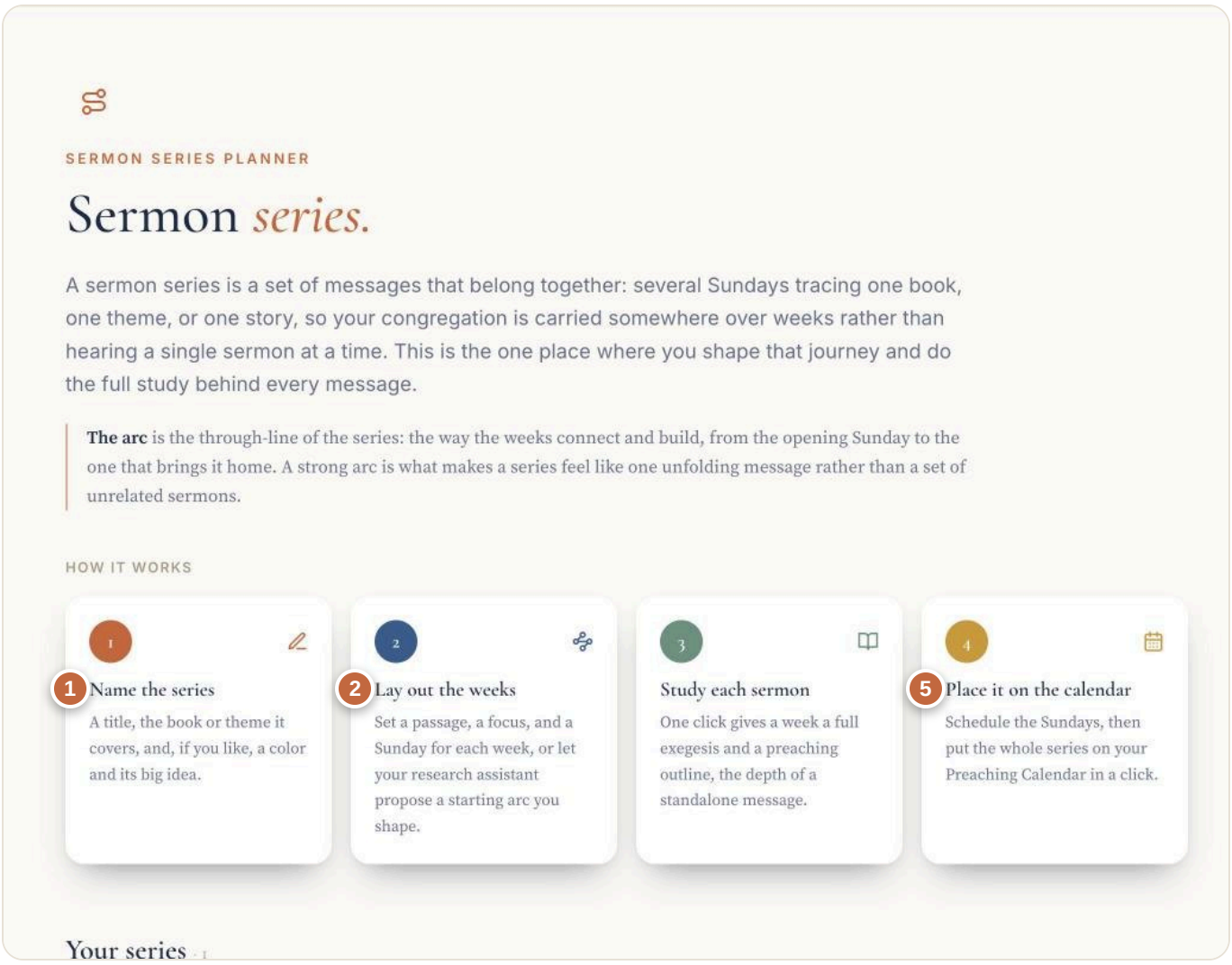
1. Step 1: bring in the sermon as it was preached.
2. Choose one of three ways: upload the recording (the fullest review, with real pace and pauses), paste a YouTube link (quick, but captions can take a day, mishear names, and count the whole service), or paste a transcript of what you said.
3. Under each choice: how to do it, and what to watch for. Do not upload a file from a YouTube download website; use the link instead.
4. Step 2: four optional boxes. Choose the sermon you wrote in the Builder so the review can compare what you preached with your outline or manuscript and read it against the study behind it. Then press Listen back.
5. A finished review opens with three measures (pace, length against your target, filler words), then Where it happened: each bar is the whole sermon, opening to close, and each dot one moment.

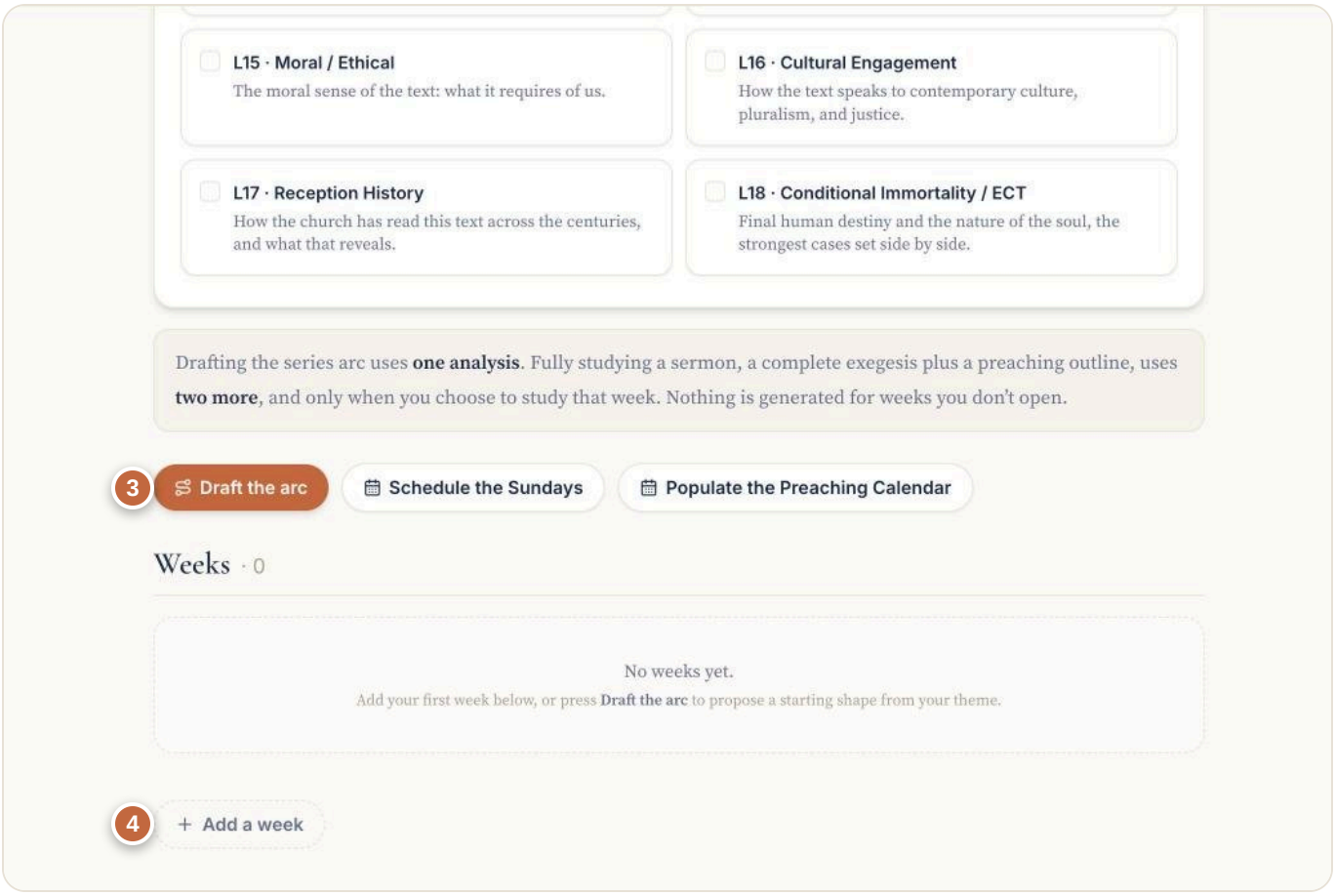
6. The timelines show where you cited Scripture, named Christ, and asked the room a question. Point at a dot to read the sentence you said there.
7. Speaking to “you” shades the sermon by how often you addressed the listener directly. Application usually lives in the darker stretches.
8. The written review: Delivery (the opening, transitions, sentences for the ear, the close) and Content.
9. Content: the idea as preached, what changed from your outline/manuscript, faithfulness to the text, what it taught about God, how Christ came into view, illustrations, and application as heard. Open any section to see what it looks for.

TIP

The pictures in this lesson are the sample on the Recap page, so you can see a finished review before you run your own. An uploaded recording gives the fullest delivery notes; a link or a transcript gives the full content review and a lighter delivery one.

10 Plan a preaching series

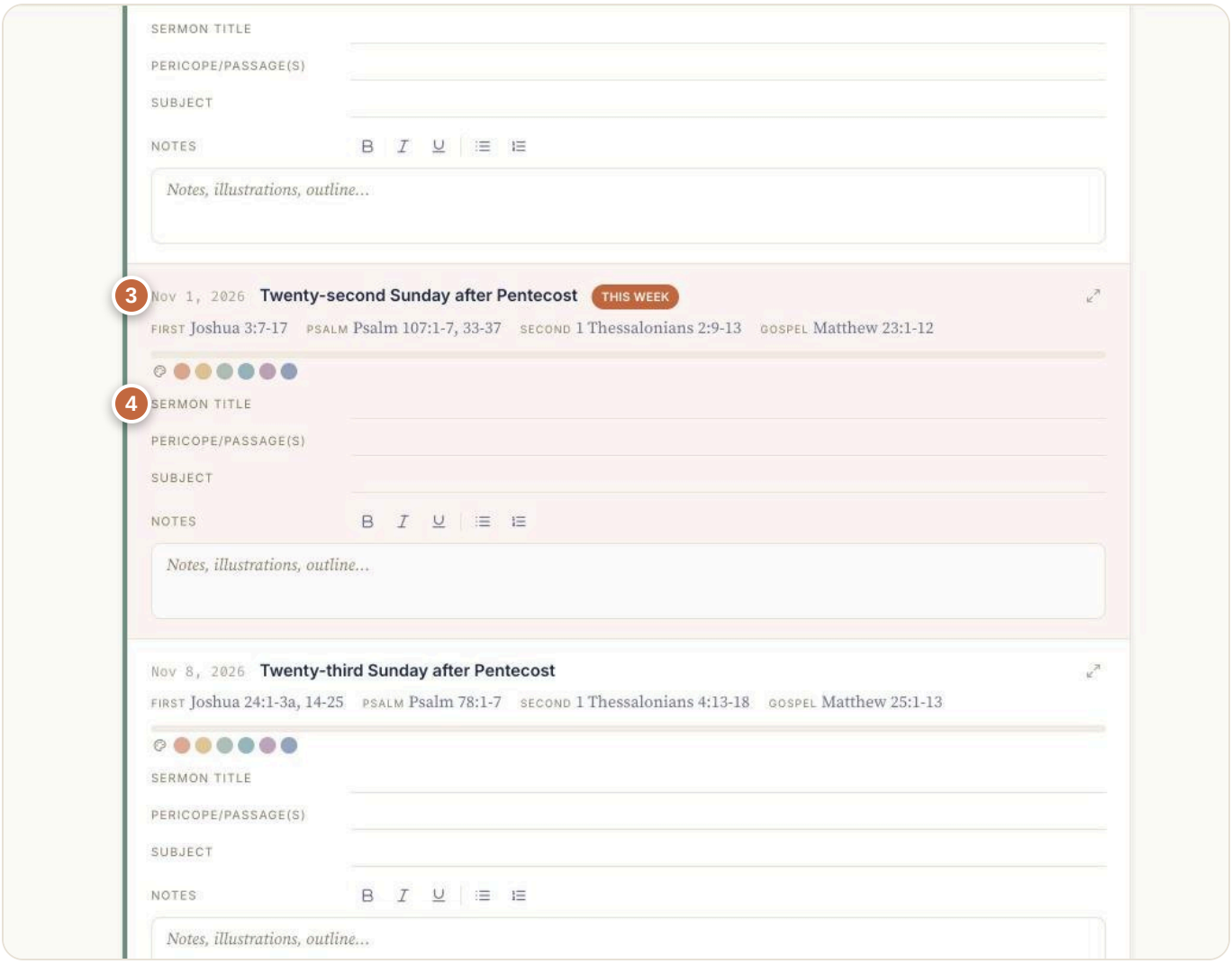




The Series Workspace holds a multi-week series in one place: the arc of the whole, and the text and focus of each week. From here you can study any week's passage and build its sermon without losing the thread.

1. Open Series and click New series. Name it, and give it the book or theme it covers and, if you like, a color and its big idea.
2. Lay out the weeks: a passage, a focus, and a Sunday for each.
3. Or press Draft the arc and your research assistant proposes a starting shape from your theme and scope, which you then adjust to your own plan.
4. Add a week at any time. For any week, choose Study this text to run a full study on that passage.
5. Schedule the Sundays and place the whole series on your Preaching Calendar in one click.

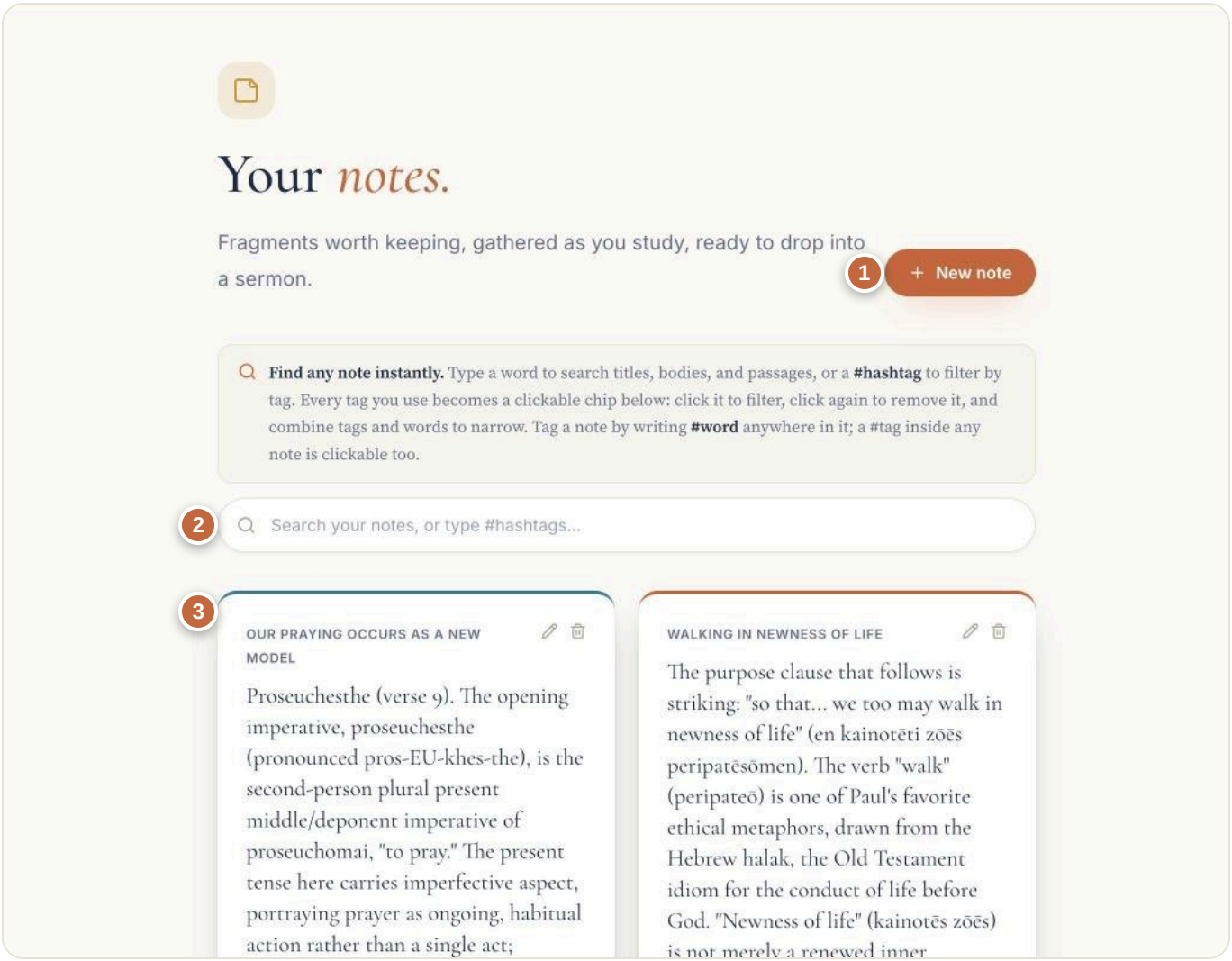
11 Plan ahead with the Preaching Calendar



The Preaching Calendar gives you the long view of your preaching. It shows the church year and lets you place a text or a finished sermon on any Sunday, so you are always preparing with the season in mind.

1. Switch between Lectionary, which shows the Revised Common Lectionary readings for every Sunday, and Traditional, a plain calendar year for your own series.
2. Choose List for a running agenda, or Month grid for a wall-calendar view. The arrows move a year at a time.
3. Each Sunday shows its readings. The current week is marked This week.
4. Write the sermon title, passage, subject, and notes right in the day, and color-code your themes. Everything saves as you type.
5. Print this calendar gives you a paper copy for the office wall.

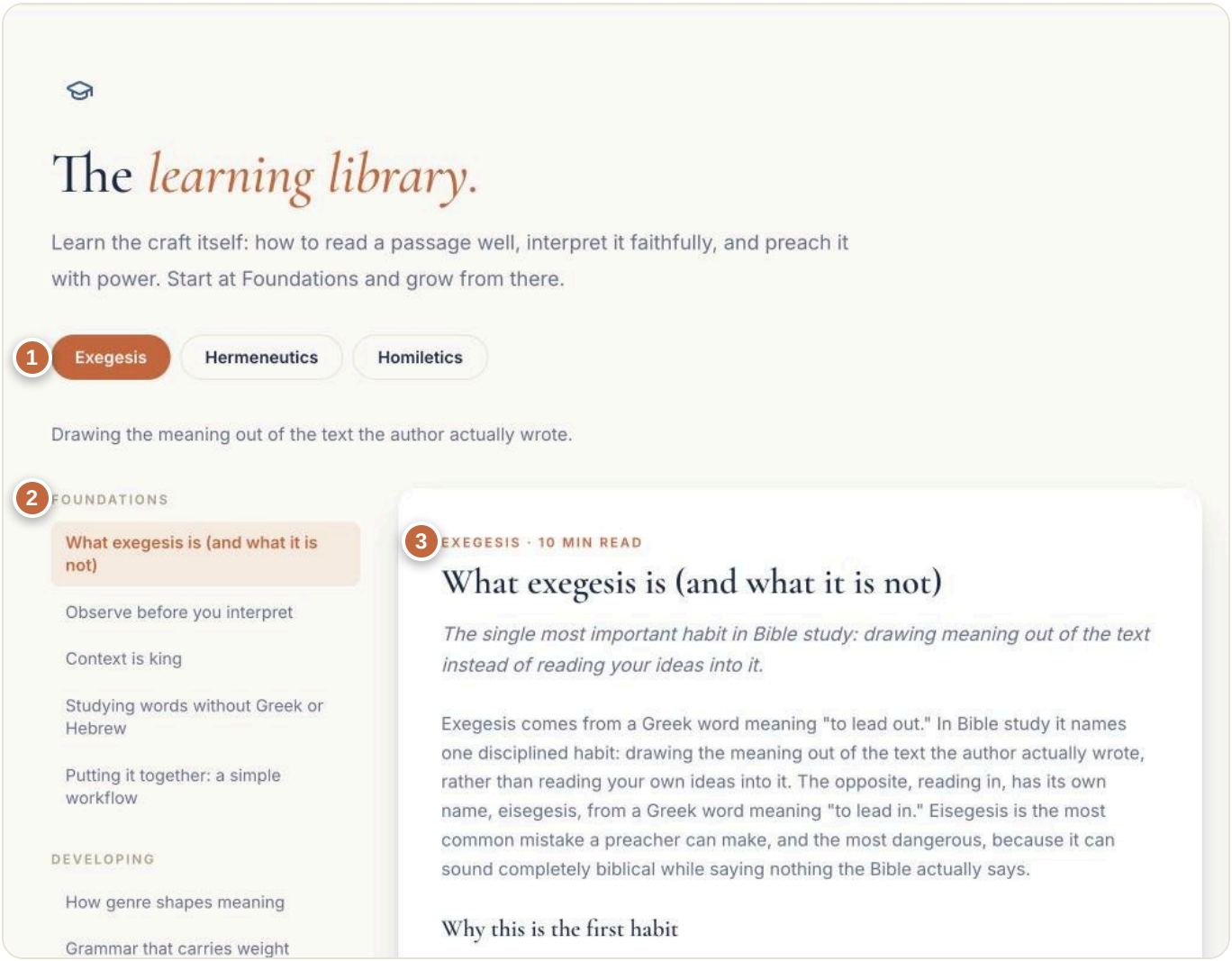
12 Keep and find ideas in Notes



Notes is your commonplace book: a single place for the observations, illustrations, and phrases you want to keep. Everything you save from a study lands here, ready to find again when you need it.

1. Click New note to write your own from scratch, or save a sentence from any study with Save selection as note.
2. Search by keyword, or type a #hashtag to gather every note on a theme, for example #grace or #prayer. Click a tag to filter to it.
3. Your notes appear as cards, newest first. Edit or delete any of them with the icons in the corner.
4. Open Notes as a panel in the Builder and the Coach, so the ideas you gathered are at hand while you write.

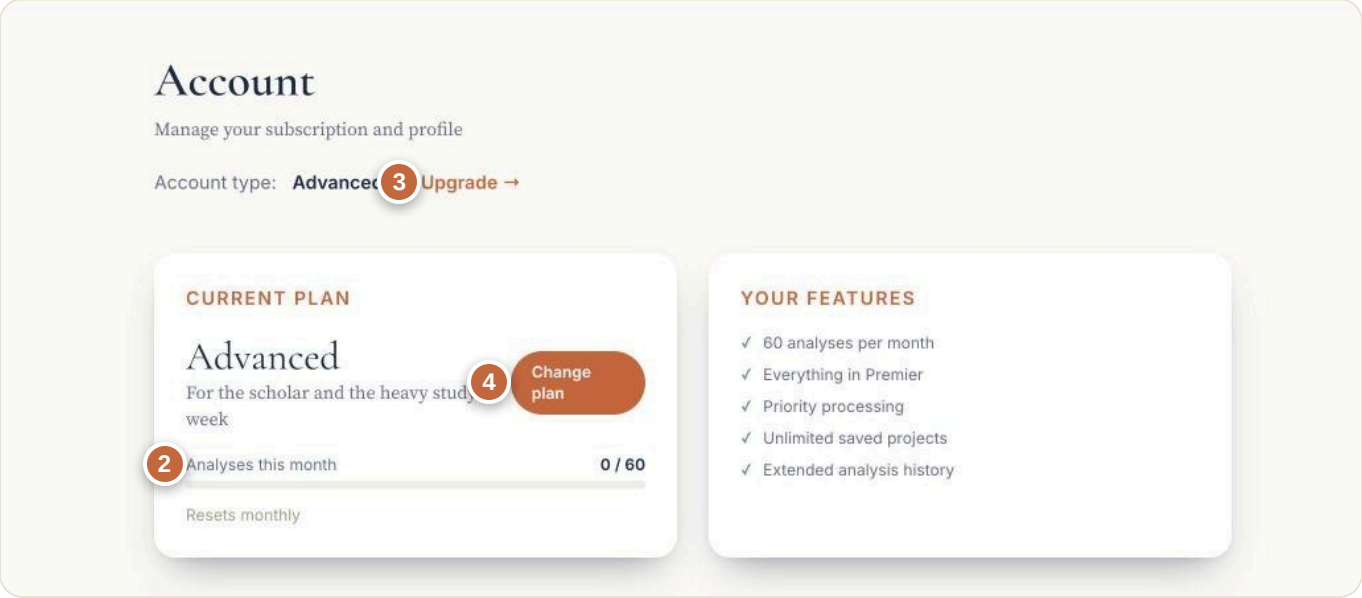
13 Grow with the Learning Library



The Learning Library teaches the craft itself: how to read a passage well, interpret it faithfully, and preach it with power. It is a course you can read at your own pace, written in plain language.

1. Choose a track: Exegesis, drawing the meaning out of the text; Hermeneutics, interpreting it faithfully; or Homiletics, preaching it well.
2. Work through the lessons down the left, grouped from Foundations to Developing to Advanced. Start at the beginning of a track, or jump to the skill you want.
3. Read each lesson in the main pane, and watch for the Worked Example, the Key Takeaway, and the Try This, which turns the lesson into a habit you can practice on your next passage.

14 Your account and plan



The Account page is where you see your plan, track your use, and manage billing. It is also where you move to a larger plan when your preaching calls for more.

1. Open Account from the menu.
2. See your current plan and how many analyses you have used this month against your plan’s limit.
3. Choose Upgrade to move to a larger plan when you need more analyses or more seats for a team.
4. Manage your billing details and subscription with Change plan, at any time.

TIP

Studies, Synthesis, series arcs, and follow-up guides count toward your monthly plan limit. Building sermons in the Coach and the Builder, Review Before Sunday, and Recap do not.