

Tech Talk  
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Many of us hear of if not use the Internet multiple times a week. We rely on the Internet to send and receive email and find information on the World Wide Web. The Internet certainly has changed the way we communicate. The Internet is a collection of networks, public and private, linked together to form what appears to be a single, unified set of devices communicating with each other. If a node on the Internet is unavailable, traffic automatically takes another route.

ARPANET, a product of the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the United States Department of Defense, is the starting point of today's Internet. The ARPANET project began in the 1960s to ensure information was reliably shared between various military institutions. This scope expanded to include other government and academic institutions. Eventually the military portions of the network were moved to a separate communications infrastructure. In the 1990s the general public gained access to the Internet.

Many technologies emerged from the ARPANET project. One of these is Internet Protocol (IP). IP defines where on a network a message is from as well as where it is going. Included in IP is a numbering scheme that uniquely identifies (addresses) each device on the Internet.

Another technology sourced from the ARPANET project is what we today call a router. These devices examine the destination address in an IP message and forward it to the next device in the network that can process that message. This forwarding process continues until the final destination device receives the message.

Routers use "routing protocols" to determine the next device that should receive a message. Routing protocols build a "map" known as a routing table telling the router how to direct messages.

The Internet is one example of a network of devices communicating using a common "language" (IP). God gave us such a network as well: His Church. Each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a "node" in God's network. Each local church is a "router" delivering God's message to people around the world. This message may be delivered (routed) to another church. That church in turn delivers it to another group of believers. In similar fashion, we receive the message from other churches and share it among our local body.

We don't have to concern ourselves with knowing to whom we should deliver God's message. The Holy Spirit provides us with opportunities by which we can disseminate God's truth. In essence, the Holy Spirit is the "routing protocol" of God's network. Paul speaks of this in Colossians 1. Epaphras heard of God's love and plan of redemption. He in turn shared it with the people in Colossae. The Colossian people shared the message with others who shared it with more people.

God works in majestic ways. This New Year we need to open our hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit. God knows how He wants us to serve Him. When we seek Him, God reveals His plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11-13). Praise the Lord and seek Him each and every day.