I. THE OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTS THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

A tremendous amount of biblical material both Old and New Testament is devoted to the subject of the Tribulation. Tim LaHaye (pg 56) mentions major OT references to this period of earth history.

1. Israel's ultimate restoration will be preceded by “the time of Jacob’s trouble (distress).”
   “Alas, for that day is great, there is none like it. And it is the time of Jacob’s distress, but he will be saved from it.” Jer 30:1-7

2. Daniel 12:1 “There will be a time of distress (trouble) such as never occurred since their was a nation until that time…” [written after the 586 BC destruction of Judah]

3. Isa 28:21 “God’s strange and extraordinary work of decisive destruction of the whole earth.” This was not fulfilled in 70AD when the nation of Israel was destroyed by the Roman armies. This describes a world-wide destruction that has not been seen since the Genesis flood.

4. Zephaniah 1 The chapter opens with a prediction of universal, world-wide destruction and closes with the same. Sandwiched in between is the example of Judah’s judgment. The Day of the Lord for Judah is a near judgment, the like of which will be visited by God upon the whole world in the last days of Gentile rule. What we are to understand is the same kind of destruction that Babylon heaped upon ancient Israel in 586 BC will come upon the whole world at the end of the ages.
   2 “I will completely remove all things
   From the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.
   3“I will remove man and beast;
   I will remove the birds of the sky
   And the fish of the sea,
   And the ‘ruins along with the wicked;
   And I will cut off man from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.

The Chapter closes with a reference to world-wide destruction.

Zephaniah 1:18
Neither their silver nor their gold
Will be able to deliver them
On the day of the LORD’s wrath;
And all the earth will be devoured
In the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make a complete end,
Indeed a terrifying one,
Of all the inhabitants of the earth.
“The Times of the Gentiles” begin at the Babylonian conquest (about 600 BC) and continue until the final world empire of a revived Babylon is totally destroyed by the Lord Himself. (sometime after the year 2000 AD).

II. NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTS THE FUTURE TRIBULATION

A. Jesus Himself called this time a period of “Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:21-22

“For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; … (it is cut short in that it is limited to only 7 years)

B. Jesus clearly said in his Olivet Discourse that the Great Tribulation would take place just before His glorious appearing at his Second Advent. (Mt 24:29-30)

29“ But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

30 “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

C. Following the teaching of our Lord, the Apostles spoke of it in their writings.

Paul may have referred to it as “The Wrath to Come” 1 Thess 1:10

He placed the Tribulation Period within “the Day of the Lord” 1 Thess 5:2

The Tribulation is called “the hour of trial” Rev 3:10

10 ‘Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

John refers to it as “The Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb of God.”

These verses and many others prove that the Tribulation is a catastrophic, world-wide judgment of Almighty God. The Preterist view is untenable in my opinion
Preterist View:  *Almost all references to tribulation are either fulfilled in the sufferings of the church or were completed by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This interpretation takes a highly symbolic (allegorical) view of the events of Revelation and is held by Amillennial or Postmillennial teachers such as R.C. Sproul.*

Futurist View:  *Revelation 4-22 is mostly future prophecy that remains yet to be fulfilled. This interpretation is held by Premillennial teachers.*

Daniel’s 70th week of years (Daniel 9) is the Tribulation Period and the last 3 and ½ years is called the Great Tribulation. The prophetic clock has stopped with the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem at 7 minutes to midnight! For the last nearly 2000 years that clock has not moved. One event will start the countdown to Armageddon and begin the final 7 years of earth history before Jesus comes to reign as King!

* (before we get into the details and events of the Tribulation we need to answer Why. What are God’s reasons and purposes for the Tribulation?*

**III. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD**

It seems out of character for a God of love to visit his planet and the people on it with such wholesale slaughter and environmental devastation! It seems as if someone has lifted a narrative from the OT and tossed it into the New Testament. But God’s character is not only love, God is also righteous and just. He is a God whose wrath against sin must be displayed. Men have taken the grace patience of God to mean he is indifferent to sin and nothing could be further from the truth!

There are several purposes for the Tribulation Period given to us in Scripture

**A. Israel:**  *To Bring national Israel from unbelief to faith in their Messiah*  
“to bring to an end the transgression of Israel” Israel’s course of apostasy and sin which has led to their wandering all over the world will be brought to an end. The Tribulation is the necessary means required to restore Israel and bring them to return to faith in God and faith is their true Messiah the Lord, Jesus Christ.

**B. Satan:**  *To bring to culmination Satan and man’s rebellion To make an end of sin:*
To Culminate the Age long mystery of Lawlessness of Man’s rebellion & thus Destroy Satan’s worldwide kingdom-rule of the antichrist / His influence

**C. Mankind:**  *To shake mankind from his false sense of security*  
To Give the world a final gospel opportunity with a clear choice  
To Bring millions of people to personal salvation and eternal life  
To force mankind to choose Christ or Antichrist.
D. To Display God’s Wrath against the sin of rebellious Man
This is God’s wrath stored against this world and its systems in their blatant disregard for all God’s institutions, and revealed truth. To a world that has rejected a Creator and perverted sexuality, redefined the family, suppressed the Truth, and destroyed God’s created order with genetic manipulation, murdered millions of God’s saints and rebelled the natural order established by God. Civilization apart from God will be totally destroyed.

By the close of the Tribulation every aspect of the Satanic Kingdom is devastated. Its Political system of one-world government is in shambles with nations all at war with each other in the Mideast at Armageddon. The Religious Apostasy of Babylon is completely destroyed. The One-world economic system of the Anti-Christ is totally gone. Every city on earth, except Jerusalem, is in ruins and shaken to the ground. The economies of earth and the technology they built no longer exist. All that man in his rebellion has created in defiance of the living God is devastated. What’s left of the military might of earth is gathered in Israel for the final solution to the “Jewish problem.” Just 7 years from now, by 2024 the world population is estimated to be 8 Billion. I suspect that no one in 10 will survive this most horrific period of earth history.