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## Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha`arayimn

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### Abstract

Khirbet Qeiyafa is a 2.3 hectare fortified early 10th century BCE site, located in the Judean Shephelah, atop a hill that bordered the Elah Valley from the north. This is a key strategic location in the biblical kingdom of Judah, on the main road from Philistia and the Coastal Plain to Jerusalem and Hebron in the hill country. It is the only site in the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel with two gates. This unique feature provides a clear indication of the site's identity as biblical Sha`arayim, a place name that means "two gates" in Hebrew. Sha`arayim is mentioned three times in the Bible (Jos 15:36; 1 Sam 17:52 and 1 Ch 4:31-32). It is located near the Elah valley, associated with King David twice, and not mentioned in conjunction with any other later First Temple period tradition. This accords with the archaeological and radiometric data that indicate a single-phase settlement in the early 10th century BCE at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

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