Language Jesus Spoke

In Palestine at the time of Jesus, three languages were written and spoken. These were Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew. Aramaic was the everyday language of Jesus and his people. Greek was the common language of business and the Gentiles. Hebrew was the language of educated Jews in Jesus’ time. The books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew. Latin appeared in written form and was used mainly by the Romans; it was rarely spoken.

Scholars presume Jesus spoke ancient Aramaic, the language in which the disciples and apostles preached the Gospel and the scribes recorded the Scriptures. Aramaic remained a dominant language for Jewish worship, scholarship and everyday life for centuries in both the land of Israel and in the Diaspora, especially in Babylon. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are many compositions in Aramaic. These texts also provide the best evidence for Palestinian Aramaic of the sort used by Jesus and his disciples.