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Hello and welcome to another episode of Bitcoin Feared and Rock and Roll, our podcast that explores the intersection of traditional finance, digital assets and digital currencies and helps you understand how digital money and digital assets will evolve in the future. I'm co-host Michael and today we share our outlooks and predictions on 2026. Joining today is the complete BFRR team of co-hosts, in particular Alex. It's great to have you back after some...

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weeks or even months of, yeah, managing some other businesses. It's great to be back. And I think I had to, I thought I had to be back for this episode because this is where you can win beers. Or, or, or put your, put your hat into the ring for winning beers. So this is why I'm here today. Good choice. It's great to have you.

01:06

Yeah, this is another special episode after so many special episodes the last weeks following the year end. Today, we're going to provide an outlook and predictions for 2026. More specifically, we're going to provide an internal and an external outlook. The internal outlook is about topics we plan for this year and guests we consider. And the external outlook is about our very market and price predictions, at least

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Bitcoin price predictions for 2026. Yeah. And we of course also have on board as we are the complete team of co-hosts today next to Alex, Manu and Jonas. guys. Hello guys. Looking forward to this episode. All right. With that, let's dive into the internal outlook that is in particular whom we intend to invite this year and the topics we

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plan to cover, but before we do so, let's briefly take a glance at our partnerships because our primary goal is actually professionalizing this very project, private project. are our own views. We earn no money with this podcast. Nevertheless, we collaborate with partners that help us further professionalize the project. One of them is Zühlke and our appreciated guest host Stefan.

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who will collaborate with us again this year and bring an additional fifth perspective on institutional blockchain, particularly the European perspective that we here promote. And then in addition, we invite Etonec also helping us in professionalizing the podcast. maybe you wanna say some words about how Etonec is gonna partner with us.

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Yes, definitely. I mean, with this podcast, of course, also we would like to always wanted to enlarge a little bit more like the focus from where we look into the digital money space, also more from the US uh angle as well. And with this, we thought that it would make a lot of sense to have also etonec as a partner where one of my dear colleagues at etonec named me Jonathan Noll that some of you may know also will appear for a future episode as a guest host. you besides the Züge collaboration and all great insights from Stefan.

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You will also hear in a regular manner insights from our guest host, Jonathan, and you can stay tuned on some developments and the topics primarily on stable coins, on Bitcoin as well, but I don't want to take too many words today. We will also do, and for the first episode with Etonec, of a little bit of a setting the scene, why we are here, what we want to talk about. So I guess let's maybe keep it a little bit brief for today, but super happy that this partnership materializes, which as Michael said, just helps us to cover the cost and expand and professionalize. that's...

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ultimate goals that we want to have and want to do with this awesome podcast. Yeah. With that massive thank you to both Atulke and Atonic for not only adding their takes and intelligence to this podcast, but also for helping us professionalizing this lovely hobby project that the four of us really enjoy. Yeah. And with that, moving further in our internal outlook, Jonas, which topics are you targeting to cover this year?

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So what I really hope generally for 2026 is that this year will be a lot about doing instead of talking. So we have talked so much about stable coins, digital euro complained on it for months, even years. And I really hope that we now get more into the concrete product phases for all of that. So what I want to do, what I tackle and bring into this podcast is a lot on the side of let's say digital money and policy. So basically how to establish the exact, you know,

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guardrails again to make stable coins in particular digital euro also a success because also for the digital euro, the regulation will enter a decisive phase in 2026. There will be a pilot coming soon. So again, we are more more coming into this practice mode. And that's definitely something that I want to cover more with this podcast and also want to invite some guests, particular from the European policy space, like from the European parliament and where we also send out a few invites. So if somebody is listening to that, who works on this topic.

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reach out to us if you haven't received an invoice yet, but that's the clear focus for me for this year and the podcast to focus a lot on policy and primarily also the European rules around digital money. I have to protest a bit here. You mentioning digital euro and stable coin in one sentence and then say that has only been talking but no doing. I think that's a misrepresentation of what has actually happened in 2025 because there was a lot of doing.

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When it comes to stable coins, I might agree when you say digital euro, but on stable coins, DLT, pilot regime and so on, there has been a lot of building and doing in 2025. Probably a little bit too harsh. What I was just remembering in my head when I said this, Manuel, was your prediction for 2025 that now what was it? 10 banks are using stable coins for cross border payments and we are not there yet.

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But of course, Alex, you are absolutely right with all unity, other licenses, also Euro stablecoins increasing in importance. So of course, you know, it's not the same speed as the euro, not at all. It does resonate with me, Jonas, honestly, also from the practical lens. And I can imagine that 2026 can be that year, right? Because we have regulatory clarity in many places in the West. The regulatory clarity will come with genius and clarity act being finalized, likely in Q1 or latest Q2. And then

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I do expect hopefully to also have a more breakthrough in payments use cases of stable coins where I would say we are still not yet, right? Because yes, there have been lots of developments also in stable coins, but tremendous growth in payments use cases, but I think it's still something that can develop further. So I'm also very much looking forward to that and also to hopefully shape it. And we can spoil that a lot of our predictions will be around stable coins today, but stay tuned. We'll not say more here, but...

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Alex, what did you bring? Do you want to bring to this 2026 year when it comes to topics and potential guests for this podcast? Yes, since I'm not yet sure how often I will appear in this podcast in 2026, I was a bit cautious announcing too many guests, but there are of

course a couple of topics I will be dealing with alone because I'm working on those topics in my job or different other projects. So stablecoins, course, that will be a topic that

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I will focus a lot on also this year, tokenization will be a topic for me that usually means tokenization of funds, so fund shares, and then anything related to crypto funds, so funds that invest in cryptocurrencies or crypto related equity. These are topics that will be a focus through my job, but also because I'm interested, of course. Some other things that I am currently thinking about.

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And these will be things that I hopefully will capture in one of the articles I'm going to write in 2026, mainly for FRZ, which is Bitcoin and Quantum. That has been a topic for the last couple of months. And I would like to, since these articles are mainly in German, I plan to also make this kind of discussion accessible to the German community. To what extent Quantum is a risk for Bitcoin in particular. It's not a no risk for Ethereum, most likely.

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but it can be for Bitcoin. And then the fair value of Ethereum. I've thought a lot about the fair value of Bitcoin. The fair value of Ethereum is another interesting topic I plan to put a bit more thought on in 2026. There's a very interesting and cool website. It's called ethval. So ETHval, which summarizes different valuation models. And one thing that intrigues me is that when you

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try to value Ethereum according to the revenues that are generated by the L1. I think the fair price of Ethereum would be \$8 or something like that. So a 99.8 % overvaluation. And that's of course one of the, let's say, most intuitive valuation models for Ethereum. So the question is, where does this difference come from? What are other ways to value ETH? That's another topic that I plan to deal with. Also in light of uh other L1s, for example, that will allow

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for example, stablecoin as gas payments, right? Where ETH currently has a big usage by being the fuel of the Ethereum ecosystem where everyone needs to have ETH in order to run smart contracts on Ethereum. But that might cease to exist in the future as well, right? I mean, depends obviously on the uptake of these new layer ones, but it's definitely an interesting development because many market participants now also...

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openly state that this is still a big hurdle for adoption, that you need this cryptocurrency in order to pay, where the value of ETH actually can be derived from. Yeah, I think all big L1s, except for Bitcoin, have the big challenge that they don't have a monetary premium, least not automatically, because also the Bitcoin price is way higher than any fees that are generated on the Bitcoin blockchain, but you just have that monetary premium, digital gold narrative, which is not

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that intuitive for Eve and Solana and all these others. So you could say everything is highly overvalued except for Bitcoin. That is one position you could take. But let's maybe not dive too deep into that discussion. That's probably something for a separate episode. Maybe that's something, Jonas, I will try to tackle this year. I just need to find an interesting guest for that episode. Definitely. And to maximize your appearances, Alex, I just learned that we need to offer you some beers and then you will make it right. So maybe that's a catch strategy for you.

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Nice. Manuel, what about you? You already said, you know, stable coins and payment use cases. What else do you want to bring? Yeah, exactly. I mean, my focus work-wise, as many know, is really this digital money angle and aspect, not necessarily other aspects, right? Around digital assets, for example, even though this is also of interest to me. So my focus also in the podcast will likely also, because this is just my biggest interest.

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around digital money. So the continued focus on stablecoin adoption and traditional payments. What are the hurdles? Dive deeper on that. Where does the market actually stand? And again, here I would expect a lot more adoption. So an exciting year going forward. So it's very nice to see that we now have the clear timeline of the Euro system with Project Pontus, for example, right? But before the Pontus pilot starts in November, 2026, there's also a test phase. So we will

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And I will follow closely whether there's actually a usage of this test phase. And then also continue to look into Pontus and Appia, which will also start, right, of the ECB, which is the longer term project. And then clearly also the adoption and the development of these new tokenized deposit platforms that emerge, right? So not necessarily all the banks that now build or have been building bank-centric private blockchains.

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but rather more these multi-bank solutions like Patio, Agoraz, Swift Ledger, where this will head towards because I think there's also going to be interesting updates with pilot transactions taking place and then seeing how that all develops. So everything related to digital money in those digital forums and you could also think about the digital euro clearly. But then next to that, also I want to focus a bit more on blockchain infrastructure in traditional financial markets for digital assets.

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So the DLT pilot regime adoption, as we know, the rules have been changed and actually softened. So there's a lot more possibilities now with the DLT pilot regime and um lots of international players now also got licenses, right? So Secure Ties, for example, a US player backed by BlackRock and clearly also CSD and MTF adoption. So for example, what Deutsche Börse is doing and Clearstream is doing. So these two.

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areas I want to focus on, big focus, digital money, but then also the blockchain infrastructure and traditional asset um and traditional finance sector. And indeed, 2026 will be super interesting around Pontus Apia, right? So the host is CVDC initiatives. So I'm really curious to see also if somebody later will bring a prediction on how this will go in terms of stars or volume or anything, but let's see.

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Yeah, and I think there's also a perfect bridge to the other area with the blockchain infrastructure for traditional financial markets, right? Because those players actually need a central bank money settlement. If it's only banks that want to do transactions, then the question is, which transactions do they actually want to settle via Pontus? But here you actually have infrastructure that requires a cash lag because there is traditional assets now represented in a tokenized form. And this is, think, where then Pontus becomes more relevant or even appier.

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There's definitely an interplay between the two. Cool. Thanks Manuel. Michael, what about you? Which topics and guests do you envision to bring to the podcast this year? Yeah. When it comes to guests, I really look forward to inviting more of the CTOs, IT architects and technologists in institutional blockchain, like I previously did with Elisa Aradjic in our

episode on architecture and the institutional blockchain space. The key argument for me is that

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It's now actually IT architecture that is the discipline that will now bring those two worlds, that is institutional blockchain and Treadfy together, because both worlds do employ fundamentally different IT architectures, one more centralized, one more decentralized, and both then require smart integration to make them efficiently and effectively work together. And I think it is the CTOs and IT architects that

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on the one hand struggle with, but also then resolve that particular issue or challenge. And when it comes to topics, also on my end, full gas on stable coins for the simple reason that I write another piece with theory as I did in the past, but also invest even more of my time in more academic research at the University of St. Gallen, which I hope to publish soon and then present here in the podcast too.

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And a topic of particular interest to me, as it is when we talk about guests, is really the architecture of different actors in institutional blockchain. With actors, I really mean institutions. There are crypto banks, there are stablecoin issuers, then there are, of course, the threat firehouses that adopt the technology. And what's of particular interest to me is the architecture of these emerging class of new enterprises.

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How long has it been that we observe crypto banks in the space? And it's interesting for me and most likely for our listeners, how they design their architectures to run an efficient and effective crypto bank, for example. Nice. Definitely topical. I found that episode quite interesting that you've done Michael, because this is also something that many people actually don't think about, but which is the core of these new players, how you design it. definitely interesting.

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Yeah, happy to hear that Manuel. It kind of fits our part of our outlook to 2026 as it's most likely going to be a less interesting year than others, if you will. And part of that is because now it's really about merging technology architecture, which in itself is not as exciting as massive price pumps in crypto assets. So it fits the year.

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To me, it really sounds like a good mix between technology topics, product regulation, policy. So I guess you can really expect from us this year also to be very well informed when it comes to all of these different angles where we all bring different perspective and including our guest hosts then even more and even deeper insights around digital money. Nice. So let's now come to our external outlook. So...

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We give you an indication what we think about how the market will develop in 2026. And for everybody who did not listen to us the whole year 2025, it needs to understand now the rules of this external outlook. It's the following that everybody of us has brought two predictions around blockchain and digital assets, digital money for 2026. And we always have the goal that they are bold and measurable.

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Let's see, we often discussed this in previous years to say, this bold enough? Was this measurable? let's see how well we can agree on that today. And I said, it's often like it's said as being bold. But in previous year, I was really surprised how many of these pro-bold predictions really materialized. So of course, they should not be completely unrealistic, but

maybe rather long shots, let's say, and not very uh easily reachable predictions. That's a little bit the ambitions.

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that we have for these predictions. who wants to start? Who wants to set the anchor for today with the first prediction for 2026? Any volunteers? I think we can start with stable coin predictions and go through them first because we have quite, quite a few. is rather negative. So maybe Michael, you want to start with your more positive one and Jonas, you also have a more positive one. And then I am happy to come in with my bit more negative prediction. Yeah, very happy to do so. So one disclaimer from my end is that usually we sit down and give our

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predictions for the year, but for 2026, I made an intentional choice to walk you through two super interesting and carefully selected predictions out of the Galaxy Research uh Report holding many of these predictions. As an investing, I did not try to outsmart a market maker who carefully invests in research or any other institutional research arm, but really track them and carefully chose to.

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Galaxy is moving the actual billions behind the infrastructure and when they predict something about stablecoin, that really good research went into it. And one of the two predictions I chose from Galaxy research is that stablecoins will overtake the automated clearing house or ACH in transaction volume in 2026. You find

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interesting Artemis data about the current state in December 2025 with an interesting comparison in which stablecoins transact 3.5 trillion US dollars in a 30-day rolling adjusted volume. So the last 30 days on a rolling basis impede for non-

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business relevant transactions like moving a value or token from your wallet A to your wallet B. So this is why it's adjusted volume. Stablecoins 3.5 trillion US dollar and then automatic clearing house or ACH in turn 7.5 trillion. By the way, ACH for the listeners who don't know is the electronic network that processes batch financial transactions between US banks. So it's a major backbone.

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at least of the financial infrastructure for US banks. And with that, stablecoins are currently at around 50 % of the ACH volume. Stablecoins have already surpassed Visa at 1.3 trillion, PayPal at 142 billion approximately, and remittances combined. So stablecoins have surpassed these three additional rails combined. And now stablecoins are not competing with these

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retail payment rates anymore, but they're really directly challenging the backbone of institutional settlement infrastructure in the U.S. Yeah, and I brought many converging factors or reasons why this is going to happen. But before that, happy to take your feedback if that is bold and measurable. I think it's an interesting prediction. I would always be a bit careful comparing those numbers and I do that myself, but

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ACH is of course an interbank payments network. uh Stablecoin volumes are completely different. And I think when you say here, it's kind of already filtered a little bit. think the only filters that have been applied to those numbers are like bot trading maybe and really useless back and forth sending of stablecoins. But what's still in there is of course the whole usage of stablecoins as a settlement asset for crypto trading, which in my opinion is still

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by far the highest, kind of all the most important use case, which is why this is always a bit comparing, not really comparing apples to apples, but still I find it interesting to say this is where Visa stands knowing that it's a bit of a different use case, but stable coins are already bigger. And if they exceed the ACH numbers, that would be quite impressive in my opinion, even though it would be wrong to conclude that now stable coins

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have become more important or taken over because two different use cases. That's the only grain of salt I would add to that prediction. Yeah, it took quite some thought and if you can actually compare them and yes, important criterion is the quality of the clearing of those very transactions. But for several reasons, I think you can actually compare them because one...

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there is function overlap. both ACH but also stablecoins facilitate digital money transfers between parties. Stablecoins are increasingly used for the same use cases that ACH dominates today like payroll, B2B payments, invoicing. And then also for me that there's direct substitution. So when a business pays a supplier via USDC instead of uh ACH that's really volume migrating from one system

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to the other. they are really competing for the same transaction flows. In theory, they do. And I know Manu, you want to jump in, but let me maybe throw in my prediction because it fits quite well, because this is exactly why I'm coming in with my prediction. Because while in theory, stablecoins are a substitute in practice, they are not at all. And if the stablecoin volume now exceeds ACH, that does not automatically mean that they take over ACH or

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address similar use cases. could just be because there is more crypto trading in 2026 and stable coins are used more intensely as a settlement asset, but for no use case that it's remotely similar to what ACH does. And this is a bit where my prediction comes in because I believe that in 2026 stable coins will not yet be used for those kind of use cases. I believe and I hope that they are getting there at some point, but, and Manu can say more about this than I, I also believe that

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most representatives of the crypto community underestimate the time and the effort it takes to actually integrate stablecoins into existing threatfire and banking rails. And this takes way longer than kind of market consensus. And I've read all these or many of the reports that have been published, including the Galaxy one and others. And it seems to be consensus that like stablecoins completely go through the roof next year and will in particular be used for these traditional payments use cases, meaning

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cross-border payments, B2B, maybe even point of sale. And I believe this is something that's earliest going to happen 2027 and beyond because the building, the building of the infrastructure, the integration into banks takes way longer than what's usually expected. And my prediction will be that the share to kind of make it measurable, that the share of what's actually payments in the stablecoin volume will hardly grow in 2026.

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Alex, I agree. On the other hand, also find the prediction of you really quite interesting. mean, in the parallel, I went to Visa. You all know the Visa on-chain analytics website, right? And they are likely on the more conservative side to basically adjust the transaction volume. And from the three point, they say the last 30 days, there was 3.1 trillion total transaction volume in stablecoins. And they say then it's

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roughly like 580 billion only that are adjusted transaction volume, where they count out lots of transactions. So it's um basically like a six of um the figure that you presented, or actually that not you presented, but that the market presents, right? The total transaction volume, even though also Artemis seemed to have cleaned it up a bit. Now with that,

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Again, you don't have to be as conservative, but I would definitely also say it's different use cases at the moment still, right? ACH is, think of SEPA in Europe, that's the ACH of uh Europe, right? And these are like real economic transactions where stablecoins so far are really not yet used. However, I do believe that this will grow. And I like your prediction then Alex as well, because I would actually also agree that

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This is more complex that most players in the stable coin and the crypto space believe. However, you could also think about different use cases, right? So what I do believe will take up is payment service providers using stable coins, right? So we already saw an announcement that Visa now uses stable coins to basically settle credit card transactions. This has nothing to do with businesses or also retail clients using stable coin as a means of payment, but rather in the wholesale.

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settlement, right? And actually also some payment service providers are looking into using stable coins also to speed up, for example, global payouts to allow the merchants that bank with them or that use their service to receive the funds quicker on their account, right? And here, potentially the hurdles are not as high as when corporates need to use stable coins or want to use stable coins. And therefore then, you you need to think about ERP integration, everything that you've just said, Alex.

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But I think in general, I would also agree that this is much more complex that many folks also in this industry imagine and think about. So I have sympathy for both, but tend also towards rather the conservative one of you, Alex, where yes, the volume will rise, but not likely from real economic transactions. And Alex, you also have a pretty good...

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uh a kind of track record with not too bullish predictions, right? If I also remember the NFTs and everything, and I think also some even more than the previous year. maybe you have a good feeling there. Yeah, I feel like most of the predictions here are super bullish rather on the positive side. So maybe I'm deliberately playing that role.

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the more negative break. maybe, I'm not even sure if it's so negative, this prediction, it's just, going to take a bit longer. I think still, and thanks for mentioning that, Jonas, I think that 2026 will still be a very decisive year for stablecoins and for stablecoin service providers. So be it stablecoin issuers or uh infrastructure players, because it's now, it's the time to build and actually kind of uh make your partnerships.

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be try to become as important and as big as possible because I believe the winners will be chosen in the next 12, maybe max 24 months. So you will need to be great when it comes to distribution. You will need to be great when it comes to being integrated into banks, into custodians. You will need to have global connections to on and off ramping partners, for instance. And this is the stuff that's been built at the moment, but unfortunately it takes a bit longer than we all hope.

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And this is actually also where my prediction fits in very well on the stable coin side, because what I'm saying is that stable coins are increasingly seen as a promising building block for digital sovereignty in the EU. Because we have heard a lot of, you know, rather negative comments when it comes to the ECB or also the commission. I had the feeling at least, and also from the parliament side, when it comes to stable coins and the really use of maybe making the euro, you know, more

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further spread, internationalize the euro and everything. But my feeling is also from some discussions I'm currently generally having, but also from research published with the Digital Euro Association, a paper on this topic that resonated very, very well with policymakers that here's some kind of a rethinking is currently happening. hope, maybe I'm too optimistic on that, but I hope that this potential is really seen now, even if there's a little bit later than the US. Don't think it's too late.

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But I'm also here, Alex and Michael are somehow in between. So I'm not saying that next year onwards, Euro stablecoins in volume will 10x, but I'm saying more and more the potential is seen and particularly the policy space is recognizing this potential. Then it may take a little bit longer until this really materialize also in making the gap lower between dollars and Euro stablecoins. So that's some kind of my prediction that is somewhere I think maybe in between.

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Also long-term, mid-term positive, but I also learned from previous years, I was way too over optimistic. So I think it also just takes time kind of echoing what you said, Alex. I would maybe distinguish ECB and EU commission here because it's kind of stance that stablecoins are contributing to sovereignty in payments in the EU. think that's already a position that EU commission is taking. Not sure to what extent and how aggressively that's been communicated, but

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I think that's also where the conflict between commission and ECB comes from. mean, they are definitely not aligned at that front. So I would say it would be really surprising if someone from the ECB makes such a statement. I would say that would be a really bold prediction. EU commission, I would say they would just start communicating whatever their position already is today. Yeah. I mean, how I see it Alex is that generally we have heard also from the ECB side a little bit positive notes when it comes to stable codes, particularly in some articles there.

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But what I and I think that's important how to measure this what I just said, right? So for me, the KPI is that there will be two public statements by either responsible EU commissioner or members of the ECB executive board. So really the senior level, not just some researchers in this, but really like more senior that really explicitly acknowledged the positive role of stablecoins in strengthening Europe's like kind of sovereignty. So that's how I want to measure that. I think Alex, like

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I know that both entities do not always agree on stable coins, but I think both are very important in the domains they are playing. And this is why I want to throw them in this same bucket, even if of course they have different intentions and different motives here. let's see, that's just the reason why I do this. What I like about your prediction, is the digital sovereignty twist. I mean, think all of us, but certainly we at SAP experienced a major...

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growth of demand for digital sovereignty in cloud computing. We don't want to rely on hyperscalers like Google in business software. We want to rely on software coming from Europe. And it's also becoming true for money. We want to rely on our money. We want to rely on our payment rates. So this is why I like it. And this is why I think it will become true.

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understanding for digital serenity, but also the demand for it already grew in 2025, but will massively grow in 2026. And the midterms in the US will make this very clear. Maybe one additional thought. I do somewhat agree also to Alex, because it's like two different roles. A commissioner can say that very quickly and easily, whereas the ECB, this is going to

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I'm quite sure that it's going to take a while and lots of internal debates whether you can actually make that argument because it's private money that the ECB would then also promote. And then the question is also what for, right? Because we have a quite efficient payment uh infrastructure in Europe already with SEPA Instant, for example. So is this now really around the international use or, you know, strengthen the euro in cross-border transfers or what do you refer to? Jonas.

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So for me, it's actually both. It's a really improving the role of the Euro when it comes to cross border, like payments, also cross currency payments maybe. So that's the one angle. And the other one, it's really that this can be a payment rail that just works outside your American influence basically. So to me, it's basically both. It's really the payment resilience argument on the one hand side and also the international role of the Euro argument here.

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And I actually, I'm not sure if I agree with you guys that it's so easy for a commissioner to say that because at least to my understanding, I've seen that like, McRaw, for example, was very bullish on stablecoin in a newspaper article, but I have not heard to the public that the commissioners are so positive on it. Maybe I missed that, but yeah, that was my starting point.

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So I would maybe on your KPI, I would already pay you a beer if the ECB stops being negative about stable coins. And if you really have one or two ECB executive board members speaking positively about stable coins, kind of defending sovereignty and payments in Europe, I'll probably buy you a brewery in 2026. Okay, I want to see this brewery. Cool. Because I'm not expecting this to happen. Well, let's leave it, but I...

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reminded myself that I think Alex, you haven't given your KPI and your um prediction, right? We talked that this is not going to happen, but what's your KPI actually? I said that the share of um payment volume, so in overall stablecoin volume, the share that's kind of identified as actually being used for payments will more or less stay the same. I said less than five percentage points change. I think that's the elegant way to measure it.

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Not so bold from my perspective, but let's leave it here. We can maybe wrap it up with my last and I think that's the last stablecoin prediction that we have and it's an easy one and I hope now Manu that meets your kind of expectations when it comes to uh tough or bold predictions because the prediction is that at least one country will ban stablecoins, most likely US dollar stablecoins, but if it's stablecoins overall, I think we shouldn't be that picky because they fear that it's

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threatens monetary sovereignty or kind of is a way to circumventing capital or enabling capital flight, these kinds of things. So 2026, we will have at least one country that is

banning stable coins. And this is just Alex, some country. So it can be any of our few hundred countries or like mean, don't want exclude any countries. So. Well, I like that. I'm actually waiting for that to happen.

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Not that I wanted to happen, but I also would expect that to happen. So I like that. good. It's really a good one. And think I'm already kind of strict enough and not too broad by saying it's because they feel threatened from stable coins in particular, because what could always happen is that a country, let's say, bans cryptocurrencies, including stable coins, and that has happened in the past. So I'm not referring to that, but actually for that very reason that they think like this is dollarization is happening.

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our local m or own currencies under attack. That's my prediction. mean, interestingly enough, so far only the Eurozone has very actively talked about it, even though the Eurozone might not even be threatened to an extent that other countries are. So yeah, very interesting. I will follow that one closely as well. So half of our predictions being in the stablecoin domain. um

37:26

Let's now move on to different domains. Maybe, Emmanuel, coming to your first prediction, what did you bring? Yeah, as a potential answer to stablecoins, as some believe the digital euro could be, I brought a digital euro prediction. And I believe, um even though there's lots of expectations now, especially from the ECB, but clearly also from some, you know, in the political realm in Europe.

37:55

I don't expect that the digital Euro legislation will be finalized in 2026. again, as a reminder for the timeline, what the ECB requires is in 2026, a final legislation in order to continue the project with a pilot phase in 2027. So actually, and this is public news, in early January, I think it's January 15th, the ECB now invites for a webinar on the pilot where they want to explain

38:23

their views on the timeline and then also what they want to do in the pilot, which shall take place in 2027, which clearly requires a preparation in 2026. So they definitely believe that this will happen. And I'm not so sure here. So the commission has given their proposal clearly, as we know, the parliament is now currently discussing. And I think that will take much longer than expected. The council has now finalized their position. So that is a given already, but yeah, it's all

38:53

on the parliament and then clearly also the trilogue. So I don't expect that the parliament will come to a joint position before Q3. So even only after the summer break, this will happen. And then the trilogue must happen in the remaining, let's say, four to five months. And I don't think this will happen. Manuel, is this really bold because you already did the math, right? So I think currently the parliament wants to vote on it. I think it's May or June. So this could be delayed. Then it's summer break.

39:21

And then you have one quarter for an agreement between the three, the council and the parliament and the commission. Like no way. Like why is this bold? Like, cause there's, there's, there's particular bodies in this European ecosystem that really wanted to happen. Right. So there's definitely parts of the commissioners, the council for sure as well. And definitely also parliamentarians that want to speed up the process. Not that's what needless to say also the ECB, right.

39:50

So there's lots of pressure on this topic and I do expect that there is going to be lots of media attention on it, lots of public awareness on it. So I think everything builds on the assumption that it will happen, but I don't think so. I think that's bold enough. Yeah, because the positions are just already so different and the parliament, there are so many requests that have been submitted now end of year. So for me, it's just so logical that it's not happening, but maybe Manuel, it's my bubble. m

40:16

And the public is expecting that and maybe also some central banks are expecting that. But yeah, I just don't see it. okay, fair enough. Let's keep it and let's say it's bold and let's see if you win the beer. Let's say it's bold. Okay. All right. Yeah, let's see. Then we have uh second predictions of you Jonas and Michi as well, right? Alex, you already gave your two. m Michi, why don't you continue with yours? Yeah, I moved to the...

40:43

spot crypto ETFs and in particular the US ones and their net inflows. The prediction is that US spot crypto ETF net inflows, that is a mouthful. So again, US spot crypto ETF net inflows will exceed 50 billion in 2026 and that is more than doubling the 23 billion in net inflows in 2025.

41:13

Not me specifically, but really Galaxy research here as outlined above is super bullish on the US spot crypto ETFs and their net inflows. And I brought some arguments why I think that this will materialize. That is 2025 already established the baseline of 23 billion in net inflows in the first full year of spot crypto ETFs.

41:42

23 billion already happened despite significant headwinds for these body TFs. One of them is that wirehouses like Wong Stanley or Mary Lynch or Wells Fargo advisors restricted or banned their advisors to actively recommend exposure to crypto. A second headwind is that Vanguard refused to list crypto products. A third would be that compliance departments operate

42:12

or operated in 2025 with maximum caution when it comes to crypto. And then most institutional allocators in 2025 still were and potentially in January still are in a kind of wait and see mode. And I think 2026 will now remove these friction points I just outlined completely or at least partially. While I agree that all these

42:39

points you just mentioned that are strengthening distribution and enabling distribution will for sure kind of add positively to that net flow. think the main by far main driver will be price dynamics. So it's almost independent of where and how easy it is to get access to those ETFs. If the price decreases, it will be very difficult to beat that number.

43:05

So I believe it will all be about price dynamics. So I want to see a very positive Bitcoin price prediction from you then Michael later, because that's kind of what needs to happen for that prediction here to become a reality. And maybe let's then also um jump to my second prediction, which is also related to Bitcoin, because I was also asking myself like...

43:28

What else do we expect now because so many things happened, right? ETFs were a super success and as Michael said, they can still increase in volume, but still on the broader scale, what could happen? And I focus a little bit on the let's say energy aspects of Bitcoin. And my second prediction is that Bitcoin mining will be recognized as a valuable tool for sustainable energy systems. So you have to hear this from Bitcoiners for I think forever that Bitcoin can be helpful when it comes to

43:57

basically stabilize the grid. in sustainable energy systems that you don't have like such a high difference between when all the sustainable energy, sun, wind is out versus when it's dark and zero. So there needs to be some stabilization tool and Bitcoin has always said that this can be Bitcoin. It's the first angle. And the second one of course is for countries that have a lot of renewable energy.

44:21

And they would like to monetize that they can always simply, let's say, turn on Bitcoin miners and shut them off when they don't have enough energy to monetize this excess energy. Like that's the typical argument that is often being made. And um it took me a lot of time to understand that fully, but I truly believe in the story. And for me, the question is always timing. And I think actually that next year could be the year where this was really recognized on a global scale that Bitcoin can help here. um

44:51

How do I say what does recognized mean? For me, the KPI is that at least three countries explicitly state that they use Bitcoin mining to stabilize electricity grid and monetize excess energy. So I hope this is measurable and bold. And that's kind of some prediction that I make around Bitcoin for 2026. I like it. And our 2025 partner, 21Energy, will like...

45:16

hear you saying that. And in that very episode, we explored the dynamics and the thinking behind your very prediction. So it's cool. You bring the energy topic back also to 2026. I wonder what's the trigger. So why 2026? Why is it now happening in 2026? Well, I often think, you know, maybe just things materialize and you don't need a particular trigger.

45:43

Because I mean countries for example like Bhutan, went into Bitcoin very quietly and then suddenly they had, you know, when it comes to citizen most Bitcoin holdings and everything. So maybe it's like a trigger is that really that it just realizes that some solutions are needed when it comes to electricity systems and that, you know, Bitcoin has reached more public awareness. That would be my hope, but I'm not seeing Alex a very, very strong trigger. Maybe the Bitcoin price generally.

46:12

But let's come to the Bitcoin price predictions and what I think around that later, but it could be correlated. Okay, Manu was missing one last prediction. Yeah, one last prediction. And I mentioned it already earlier that there are many new blockchain infrastructures that pop up in networks, right? So we've been discussing this. remember uh one news episode, which I've done with Stefan Krasman on exactly that where stablecoin firms, also in general crypto firms are now

46:41

building the new layer ones or also layer twos. So there's arc from circle, there's tempo from stripe and so forth. And my prediction is that no new layer one or layer two will become a top 10 blockchain measured by different KPIs. And what I mean by different KPIs can really be different KPIs. And what I found is a very nice website, for example, DappRadar that tracked thousands of uh Dapps sold.

47:10

decentralized applications across dozens of blockchains and it provides rankings and chain rankings to compare different blockchains, how they perform in terms of user engagement, number of active wallets and other key metrics. Sadly, it was mentioned on Twitter that this website will wind down, although it is still active and actually also tracks the um activity on those blockchains. So I will have that and follow up with that. The other metric could be

47:39

Total value locked where CoinGecko for example also provides a nice overview where clearly the leader by far is Ethereum still, right? Then Solana is on second place at the moment. Even Bitcoin then comes as a third one. Then Binance Smart Chain, Base, Tron, Plasma, Arbitrum and so forth. And these are all names that are more or less familiar to at least those that are active in the space. And I don't expect that any new challenger will rise in 2026 already.

48:08

to become like a meaningful blockchain when it comes to these different MKPI. either um total value locked, but that's very broad. KPI others could be, for example, the unique wallet uh numbers and the volume that is happening on these blockchains and so forth. So also rather pessimistic one. I do believe that these chains will play a role, but not already in 2026. Okay. Interesting. Interesting. What's your opinion in general on

48:38

application specific blockchains and corporate blockchains. And you mentioned ARK uh Tempo is another one, which I would characterize as application specific because they mainly have these payments use cases in mind. And then we have corporate blockchains and maybe I'm misrepresenting them now, but Canton would for me be an example of a corporate blockchains, not a public permissionless one.

49:04

have always been and still am rather skeptical of these blockchains. Not a single one has really scaled over the past 10 plus years. But there seem to be now new ones and in particular the application specific ones. I understand why they do that. So I be interested in your view. I mean, I'm open to it, honestly, because I think when it comes to real world adoption where every, especially Stablecoin Institute and Stablecoin player is now interested in to really get into traditional payments.

49:34

and provide the benefits of blockchain to payments, then you cannot afford, for example, clogged blockchain just because there's an NFT drop happening, right? This is one of the arguments that you usually also hear. And I totally get that, right? And you need to, when you go into traditional finance, you really need to have SLAs in place. And then for example, also the native coin where you need to pay your gas fee incomes in and so forth. So I'm very open to that. And I do...

50:04

believe that many of the payments firms that now invest into stable coins actually require a different architecture that eventually doesn't exist yet. And that's why they now invented. But the question now is, will those use cases really scale and happen and adopt? Right. I think there's plenty of backing for those networks. When you look at the list of corporates that support them.

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It's impressive, number, right? It doesn't end actually. It's like hundreds of corporates that expressed interest in using those. But the question is, will it actually happen and when will it happen? Right? And this is then the rather skeptical prediction that I give that I say, well, we will see test transactions and they are live now with test networks actually already, Tempo and Arc, right? But the real adoption I don't expect will yet happen.

50:55

I think governance will be extremely important here because if it's really a blockchain, let's say a single company offers a blockchain and lets others use it, um I think that's a huge limiter to scaling. I think the governance has to be as open as possible and everyone who

supposed to use the blockchain needs a stake somehow and an interest in actually making that blockchain big. has always been the huge...

51:19

biggest disadvantage and in my opinion one of the main reasons why in the past those blockchains haven't haven't scaled. I mean what's interesting I think in this new aspect now is that it is a public permissioned architecture that those chains usually go for right where yes everybody can participate but there's still permissioned validation right so with layer 2s it's it's obvious with base for example but now also these new layer ones they are all permissioned.

51:46

Yes, they want to become permissionless that others can also do the validation but at the beginning it's rather permissioned. And that I think so far has not really been brought up. It's all been private permissioned but now it's rather the public permissioned world that we're entering and let's see where this goes to. So I'm quite open and look forward to following the adoption very closely. Cool. So very nice predictions, eight predictions. So this means in total eight beers could be won. Let's see how good.

52:15

how good we are and by the way guys, also have to think about when we meet to drink the beers from the last year's predictions, right? So not that we miss that. But that's something I guess we... uh We could think of a community event again. That's something I enjoyed in the past years. Yeah, definitely think about it and not forget it. Maybe in Frankfurt this time. Yeah, Alex and I at least, Alex a lot.

52:44

me sometimes visit Frankfurt. Nice. So as another highlight of our outlook episodes, let's say, is our Bitcoin price uh prediction. Of course, here, always, it counts to your own research. This is no investment advice, right? This is just for dudes talking about their perspectives on the Bitcoin price, no more, no less. But it's always fun to think about how the market develops and as we were so...

53:10

horribly wrong last year. Let's see if we are more right or less wrong when it comes to 2026. So now I'm really curious to see what you guys brought for the Bitcoin price prediction. Maybe Emmanuel, you want to start with your bet, your prediction for the Bitcoin price in 2026. And maybe to start with today, we stay around 90k US dollars. That's the starting point when we record this episode.

53:33

Yeah, 90,000. I mean, this has come down significantly from the recent all time high that we had, I think, which was 126 or so. And my prediction is that it will rise again with genius and clarity being finalized and put into 426. You know, the regulatory clarity will continue to evolve in the U.S. and this will increase interest in the crypto sector again. And actually also alternative assets that can be considered as, you know,

54:03

like a hedge against other asset classes. For example, gold is already at an extreme all-time high. Other precious metals have followed. For example, silver has rallied over the last months. So there's been lots of investments in alternative assets, but not necessarily over the last months into crypto and into Bitcoin. um

54:25

I think researches also of traditional financial sector will continue to discuss the benefits of investing in alternative digital assets like Bitcoin. With this regulatory clarity, also maybe combined with your prediction with the ETF and Flow machine, this will then also lead to elevated prices. So my uneducated guess is 160k at um the end of the year. There's got to

be a journey as obvious, but yeah, I'll stick to the end of the year, which is going to be 160k. So basically doubling the price as from now.

54:55

That's a bullish start. that's locked in 160k for Manuel. Alex, what about you? I'm bit surprised that Manuel is so bullish. He's usually always at the lower end. At least was as far as I remember when it comes to these predictions. Times are changing. That's why he won 2025 because he predicted the lowest price and still was racing hard.

55:19

So I had various strategies in predicting the Bitcoin price over the last year. I remember your random walk, Alex. Yeah, yeah. In year one, it was pure gut feeling. I think that was the only time when I actually won. Yeah. In year two, I did the random walk. And as you know, the expected value of a random walk is always the value of today, which would be 90k, but that didn't work out at all. So last year I added a drift to the random walk, which was probably the most, let's say,

55:49

quantitative uh approach that I was completely wrong there. So I decided I go back to gut feeling, maybe informed gut feeling. I didn't overthink it because you could probably spend weeks thinking about that and your guess would probably be as good as any guess. But one thing I've at least thought about is this four-year cycle thing that we usually have in Bitcoin.

56:14

Manuel's prediction at least goes very much into the direction that we will now for the first time break this cycle because time-wise, we are currently at the top of the four-year cycle. It started in 2022 and it's always after roughly three years, we are at the top of the cycle and then the price decreases. So if we stay in this four-year cycle, 2026 would actually be a very bad year. uh

56:36

I have never been a believer in this four year cycle thing because you cannot control for whatever else is happening. And I think the price is way more driven by macro factors than a four year cycle, wherever this might come from. So I will also have a rather positive price prediction. I would also have said 160 K actually Manuel, but since you already took that value, I will go a little bit lower and say 150 K for the end of 2026, which is my informed gut feeling prediction.

57:04

Cool. Very well argued Alex and I appreciate your change in strategies from year to year. So em let's see if you win a beer this year on this one. So Michael, for you, we are now expecting also a bullish estimate, right? From your other Bitcoin predictions on the ETF. So what did you bring? Yeah. Sorry for that downer now, but let me start with something that might sound a bit...

57:28

contradictory coming from someone about to actually give you a price prediction that is price predictions in general are really tricky, if not simply impossible. We had a conversation if we should do it in the first place. And 2026 is actually even less predictable than usual for Bitcoin because when we look at option markets right now, the market

57:49

is pricing rough and equal odds of Bitcoin hitting 50k or 250k by year end. So 50k or 250k at year end at same odds. That's a five-time spread and reflects how volatile uh markets look on Bitcoin. Nevertheless, we agreed on doing so and therefore I offer my predictions. My lower target is 65k.

58:16

for the year. So if we see a sustained risk of environment in traditional markets, as we see at the moment, if monetary conditions tighten more than expected, or if institutional flows through the spot ETFs slow down, then Bitcoin could drift toward the 200 moving average zone, which sits in exactly this 65k region, I predict as the low target. My high target, so the highest price of the year is going to be 180k.

58:45

This scenario would then assume that several things really positively align, like institutional adoption continues steadily, as we all predicted here, through spot ETF inflows, through getting stable or even improving macro conditions with potential easy monetary policy. But I think this will only happen, yeah, and it has to happen if we soon in Q1 break through 100 to 150k again, which is a...

59:14

resistance at the moment, I think. But now, really coming to my here and target price, not as bullish as Alex needs me to be, it's 135k. This sits comfortably in the middle of that consensus range from all the institutional analysts that I before and in preparation of the episode read through that clusters between 120k and 170k. So the whole rationale is

59:44

right in the middle of the range that institutional analysts offer. Wouldn't that be 145? Live math is always tricky, but maybe you should correct upward if you try to that mid of that range. Yeah, thanks for the correction. I trust your math here, your live math. 140. So I made Michael a bit more bullish now. 10K on top.

01:00:06

But yeah, mean, what we have seen and I appreciate also Michael, you adjusted your strategy as well, right? From last year, you said from the day where we recorded onward, it was just going up and no going down. And now you also expect that maybe a down. But it also seems from what you just said, Manuel, Alex, that you are like, this is the most bearish one, of course, even still be relatively high given the state today. But from this three, you have the lowest prediction.

01:00:31

The problem is now if Michael takes 145 K, I'm really sitting in a sandwich between Manuel and Michael and it be very difficult to win actually, because it's probably in a range of 5 K or so that the price has to land for me to win. But well, I didn't make any strategic bets here that as you can see, I was honest. Well, since you're gonna buy a brewery for Manu anyway. Jonas, for Jonas. For Jonas who cares about a single beer. Yeah.

01:00:58

I really look forward to the brewery and let me now tell you how I will win another beer here next year on the Bitcoin price. you know, it will not be between 140 and 150k Alex. So, you know, it doesn't matter who sits in between where. My prediction is 180k US dollar and also Alex, I tried which strategies worked well and did not work well in the past. So, what I did is I used the same price prediction as last year.

01:01:24

In bad years, I tend to be too pessimistic. In good years, I tend to be too optimistic. So this year I changed my strategy. I keep my 2025 estimate, which was as we know, way too optimistic. So I keep this one. I could imagine a relative outperformance of Bitcoin to gold. We have seen that gold has had all time highs kind of on a monthly, weekly, daily basis even.

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partly silver the same. think for Bitcoin, is a lot of money flew into this. Like, IBIT has seen massive inflows, even in the times where the price basically declined. So I think there is still

lot of potential for Bitcoin to outperform this precious methods here. And that's why I could see this kind of similar to gold maybe in previous years, where central banks bought a lot in the back. So not saying that central banks now all buy Bitcoin, but

01:02:15

where this momentum is just building up in the back despite very strong, let's say short-term catalysts because we have the ETFs now clear, we have regulation clear, right? So a lot of for Bitcoin, you could say check, check, check, but still I think it will be a very optimistic year and let's see if my change in strategy makes sense and I win a brewery and another beer. think that the main reason why you could be right is because at the moment it doesn't feel at all like 180K and that's usually when it happens.

01:02:43

Maybe that's a very subjective view, I had the impression in the past when everyone was totally sure that the price would, I don't know, double in the next year, it never happened. And these spikes in prices always were kind of surprising. And it would be quite surprising in my opinion if that now happened in 2026, because I think the sentiment is bit subdued at the moment. yeah, I like you kind of sticking to your 2025 target also for 2026.

01:03:11

Let's see. So definitely 2026 will be exciting. We will keep you posted on all the developments and let's see how the beer race will be in 2026. So in 12 months from now, we will know. Yeah. I'm actually, maybe allow me that last comment because I'm not sure if 2026 would actually get exciting. I actually think it will be a pretty boring year in crypto and digital asset. And I think that's a good thing. So I am specifically not expecting any useless uh

01:03:41

trends like a meme coin spike or another SBF or another NFT mania. think nothing like that is going to happen in 2026. And I very much look forward to that just kind of work happening integration into Threadfyre. That's my kind of hopeful for 2026. So I'm looking forward to a boring 2026 in crypto.

01:04:02

Yeah, this boring gear hypothesis you just outlined is really prevalent in the analyst and research space. So many of us, if not all, expect 2026 to be boring, which is a good thing because then people concentrate on building and focusing on moving the needle instead of digesting a crazy SPF case or crazy price developments. But this is still an early space. Anything can happen and never underestimate crypto.

01:04:30

And if the analysts are rather think it's will be a boring year, then for me, this is another reason to think that it's maybe more exciting if everybody thinks that, but let's see. I'm more on the anti-cyclical side today. So let's see, but I agree Alex, it would be good to have less hype, more productive stuff happening in the space. That would be definitely good for the space. But I find it quite impressive that we all bet above 100K because I looked again at the price, right? And it, 100.

01:04:59

a thousand is a reality only since basically one year, right? Because it only started in December, 2024, where the first time on December 16 or 17, the hundred thousand mark was crossed. And then, you know, it, it, it only went up above 100,000 in last year in 2025. And we all expect that this will continue.

01:05:25

On the other hand, nobody knows. mean, it could also come down significantly and then rather find a new range in the 50Ks or the 20Ks or the 5Ks. But we all expect rather on the upper end. yeah, curious to see how that price will actually move. Brilliant. The first

Note: This transcript is an AI translation from the English Audio.



episode, our outlook on 2026 and eight predictions are locked in. Now let's revisit them in exactly one year to see if Alex buys that very brewery. That would be lovely.

01:05:54

And until then, thanks for listening to Bitcoin Fiat and Rock and Roll. Thanks for you guys to bring your takes, predictions and outlook. Connect with us on YouTube linked in and our expert community on Telegram, both in German and English. For details, check the show notes. Don't forget to visit our website, bfrr.info for more detailed analysis and make sure to subscribe to Bitcoin Fiat and Rock and Roll wherever you get your...

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