



# Epoch's Quarterly Capital Markets Outlook

SUMMARIZED TRANSCRIPT  
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Each quarter, Epoch Investment Partners' Executive Chairman and Co-CIO is joined by our Global Investment Strategist to discuss themes affecting global capital markets. A full replay of the webinar is available on our website, [www.eipny.com](http://www.eipny.com).

## SLIDE 2

### Positioning for a Recovery: Macro Factors

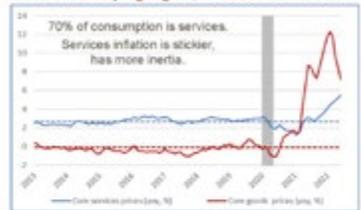
"We understand better how little we understand about inflation" – Jerome Powell, June 2022

1. Inflation determinants
2. Recession: Depth and Duration
3. Valuation factors
4. Global elements
5. No Roaring 2020s ahead

## SLIDE 3

### Services Inflation: More Pervasive, Persistent and Pernicious

Services: Creeping higher, 10 consecutive months

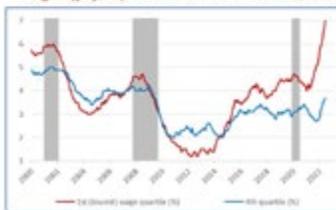


Goods inflation: Most categories reverting

- Already halfway back to target
- Services inflation: Rents, wages, openings
- Wages: Especially lower income workers
  - Sectors like leisure & hospitality
  - Strong through Labor Day

- Rental market: Tightest since 1980s
- Case-Shiller home price index: 21% yoy
  - Inventory: Near record low
- But Zillow rents (yoy, %) already rolled over
- Shelter weight is huge
- CPI: 32% (core: 40%)
  - PCE: 16% (core: 18%)

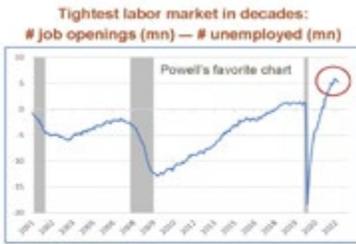
Wages (yoy, %): Fed needs to break this, now



Although much of the focus over the last year has been on goods inflation, we believe services inflation is now more critical. Specifically, it is more pervasive (representing 70% of consumption), persistent (that is, stickier and more inertial) and pernicious (that is, more likely to result in a wage-price spiral, as in the '70s). To understand the future path of services inflation, pay special attention to job openings, low income wages, and rents.

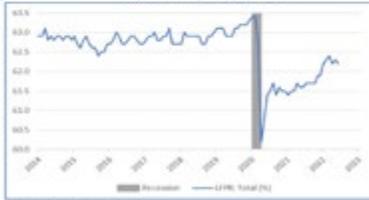
SLIDE 4

**Job Openings (11.2 million) vs. Available Workers (5.9 million)**



- Job openings**
- Healthcare: 1.9 mn
  - Leisure & hospitality: 1.6 mn
  - Retail: 1.1 mn
  - Mfg: 0.8 mn
  - Education: 0.6 mn
- Revenge fun/travel**
- Keeps L&H demand solid though Labor Day

**Labor Force Participation Rate: 1 ppt < pre-Covid level**



- LFPR: Missing 1.5 mn Workers**
- Elderly: LFPR has not rebounded
  - Long Covid: And other health issues
  - COVID stimulus: Created cash cushion
  - Immigration: Plummeted during COVID

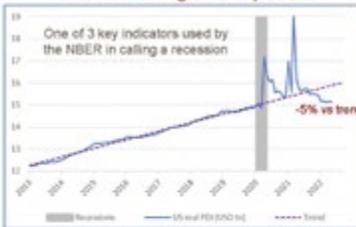
Source: NBER, Bloomberg, BLS

The gap between job openings and available workers has never been larger. This suggests a very tight labor market and upward pressure on wages, especially for workers in healthcare, leisure & hospitality, and similar sectors. One reason for this imbalance is that some workers have not rejoined the labor force, creating a critical supply-side disruption.

SLIDE 5

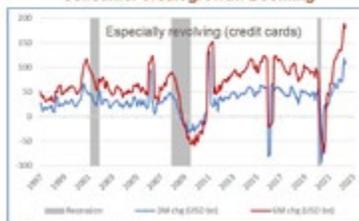
**Wages Lagging Inflation: Declining Real Personal Income**

**Real PDI: Waning since Sept 2021**



- Borrowing suggests underlying fragility**
- Explains resilient consumer
  - Savings rate 4.4%; "Normal" is 7.2%

**Consumer credit growth: Booming**



Source: NBER, FRED, Bloomberg

Personal income is now 5% below trend, largely because overall wage gains are not keeping pace with inflation. One consequence has been booming consumer credit, often at quite high interest rates. This suggests the consumer is more fragile than consensus realizes, as reflected in an extremely low savings rate.

SLIDE 6

**Inflation Headed to 2%, Eventually**

**Consensus glide path: Still too optimistic**

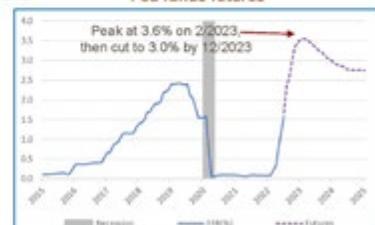


**If it ain't frightening, it ain't tightening**

- Market pricing: Next six FOMC meetings**
- 7/27: 80 bps
  - 9/21: 60 bps
  - 11/2: 35 bps
  - 12/14: 15 bps
  - 2/1: 5 bps
  - 3/22: -5 bps

- When will equity market trough?**
- Possibly when market becomes confident inflation is finally headed back to 2%
  - Enough Fed tightening has been priced in
  - But policy lag is famously "long & variable"

**Fed funds futures**



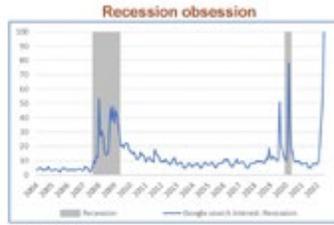
Source: NBER, Bloomberg, FRED

The Fed is expected to hike interest rates to well over 3%, which will be the highest in 15 years. We expect interest-rate sensitive parts of the economy to rollover hard. However, we believe the equity market will trough once investors think enough tightening has been priced in to ensure services inflation returns to target.

SLIDE 7

**Are We Already in a Recession? A Majority of Americans Believe So**

- NBER's 3Ds:** Depth, diffusion, duration  
 "A significant decline in economic activity, spread across economy, lasting more than a few months"
- NBER's three key indicators**
- Employment, Consumption, Personal income
- Two negative GDP Qs? A media heuristic**
- US Q1 GDP: -1.6%**
- Employment & consumption were strong
    - Net exports contribution: -3.2 ppts
- Atlanta Fed on Q2 GDP: -1.5%**
- Consumption: +1.5%
    - Inventory contribution: -2.5 ppts
- Underlying growth: Slowing toward 1%**
- Could certainly have a couple negative Qs
- Key question isn't recession or not**
- But will growth implode like GFC & TMT bust?
    - Where is the leverage, excesses?

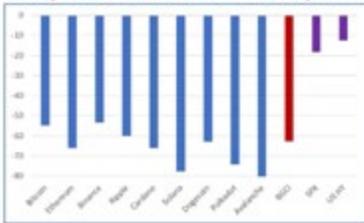


There is much misunderstanding of what constitutes a recession. The NBER has three key indicators, employment, consumption and personal income. Only the latter is currently weak. We believe the former two will soon roll over and that a "short and shallow" recession is highly likely over coming quarters.

SLIDE 8

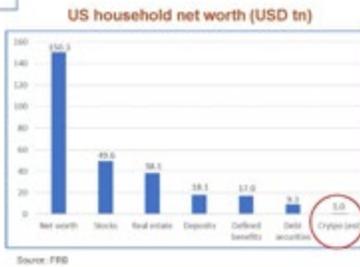
**What Happens in Crypto Stays in Crypto?**

-62% ytd: But too small & insular to be systemic



- What else could go nuclear?**
- Private equity or VC?
    - But not marked to market
    - And narrative remains intact
  - US VC funds raised a record \$120 bn in H1
    - Although Q2 was noticeably slower
  - Others: Lev loans, private debt, HY?

- Where are excesses, imbalances, leverage?**
- Something usually breaks when Fed hikes
  - We'll know soon: Policy rates to exceed 3% (a 15Y high) within two months
- An optimistic observation**
- If (a) nothing breaks and (b) services inflation rolls over, then markets might trough in Q4



Often when the Fed hikes by 300 bps or more, something systemic breaks. The result is financial contagion and a seizing up of lending markets. Crypto is too small and insular to be systemic. Many pundits also worry about private equity and venture capital, but so far their narrative remains intact. If systemic risk is avoided this cycle, then equity markets could trough in Q4.

SLIDE 9

**After the Market Troughs: Typical 6 month SPX Return is 25%-30%**



- Signs the market has troughed**
- Services inflation: Heads back to target
  - Systemic risk: Not rising
  - Early cyclicals: Begin to outperform
  - Valuations: Rebound, anticipate rising EPS

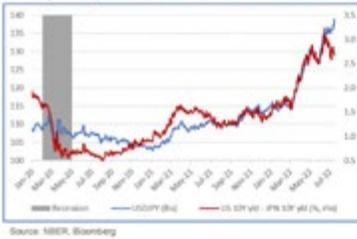


Once equity markets trough, the following six months is usually quite favorable for investors with average returns of 25%-30%. This appreciation is often front-loaded, which gives investors incentives to jump the gun. There is also considerable regularity in sector leadership, with tech, discretionary, banks and industrials typically outperforming.

SLIDE 10

**The Sinking JPY: Reason to Avoid Japanese Equities?**

10Y spread peaked in June: No one told the JPY



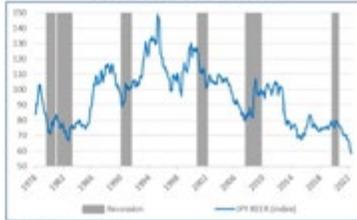
**USD on fire: Has blown past fundamentals**

- Driven by 10Y spread and Terms of Trade
  - US is a net energy exporter
- Likely to reverse during next few months

**JPY on sale: Reasons to expect a rebound**

- 10Y spread
- Cheap
- Extreme move already (99<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Positioning is short

JPY on sale: Cheapest ever



Source: NBER, Bloomberg

Turning to non-US markets, we believe USD/JPY has peaked and will trend lower over the next quarter or two. The 10Y US-Japan spread has peaked, the JPY is the cheapest it has ever been, and the move has already been extreme. Finally, spec positioning is short, but usually moves to neutral during recessions.

SLIDE 11

**ECB's First Inflation Test: And Russia Takes the War to Europe**

EU NG price: Back to normal in 2025?



Source: Bloomberg

**European equities are cheap, but**

- Inflation: Same problem as Fed
  - ECB is much more dovish
- Italy: Repeat of Euro crisis?
  - 5 systemic EU crises in 15 years
- NG: EU needs to rebuild inventory
  - Winter is coming

Nord Stream NG flow: RUS to GER (MCM/d)



Source: ECB, Bloomberg

Europe faces three major challenges: high inflation (similar to the US), possible systemic risk out of Italy, and reduced natural gas supplies from Russia. A recession appears probable and we expect choppy markets ahead.

SLIDE 12

**Investment Implications: When to Start Positioning for a Recovery?**

"The FOMC is looking for convincing, compelling evidence that inflationary pressures are abating"  
— Jerome Powell, June 2022

**1) Services inflation: More pervasive, persistent and pernicious**

- Watchlist: Job openings, 4<sup>th</sup> quartile wages & rents

**2) Short & shallow recession: Key risk is hidden leverage & excesses**

- Something usually breaks when Fed hikes 300 bps (2007: housing finance, 2001: TMT)
- 2nd risk to benign scenario: Wage-price spiral in services, Powell channels his inner Volcker

**3) Choppy markets: Trough when market confident inflation is heading back to target**

- Equity valuations appear fair. But bottom-up 2023 earnings estimates are delusional
  - They call for higher top-line growth and margin expansion
- Gains occur early: Best sectors typically INFT, COND, FINL vs UTIL, ENRG, CONS

**4) Global markets: Europe's three challenges**

- China: Only major market where both monetary & fiscal policy are stimulative
- USD overshoot: Expect lower USD/JPY over next 3-6 months

**5) Next decade won't be a repeat of the 2010s: Reflation and the 3Ds**

- Relative to last two decades: Higher trend inflation, wage growth & labor share
- Monetary & fiscal policy: Less room for stimulus (MMT into the dustbin)
- Lower top-line growth: Implied by each of the 3Ds
- Headwind for long-duration assets: Including speculative tech, biotech, VC & real estate



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